

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
NUMBER

Interview with  
Rayford Price  
January 3, 1972

Place of Interview: Palestine, Texas  
Interviewer: Mr. Jim Riddlesperger  
Terms of Use: No Restrictions  
Approved: Rayford Price  
Date: Sept. 24, 1973

Oral History Collection  
Representative Rayford Price

Interviewer: Dr. J. W. Riddlesperger

Place of Interview: Palestine, Texas

Date: January 3, 1972

Dr.

Riddlesperger: I am J. W. Riddlesperger interviewing Representative Rayford Price, a representative from Palestine, Texas, District Sixteen, for the Oral History Collection of North Texas State University. The date is January 3, 1972. The general topic is legislative policies for teachers of Texas politics. Representative Price, will you give a brief description of your biographical past?

Representative  
Price:

Well, I was born on February 9, 1937, in Jacksonville, Texas, and my parents are Mr. and Mrs. Quanah Price, who now reside in Frankston and publish the Frankston Citizen. I grew up in the newspaper business, and I graduated from Frankston High School in 1955 and then went to Lon Morris Junior College for two years, then pre-law at the University of Texas, and graduated from the University of Texas Law School. I was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1960 while a freshman in law school and have served ever since then.

Riddlesperger: In order to get the discussion going, what particular legislative bills are you most interested in?

Price: Oh, I have been interested actually in a general cross-section of legislation. I don't know that I have a real particular interest that I've become an expert in. Primarily I have been interested in legislative and judicial reforms, constitutional revision, and I have been interested in the local area in the development of the Trinity River. I've carried a series of bills in that regard.

Riddlesperger: One of the big problems coming up in Texas politics is concerning finance. I know that the Legislature this past year had to put some additional taxes on, and it looks like we are going to have to have some more still, and along with the school finance problems, do you have any ideas on how Texas should answer the problem of public finance or state finance?

Price: Well, I don't have any easy answers to it. You have asked me a two-part question. First, the tax bill that will have to be passed the last year of this biennium, sometime during 1972, how that will be raised? I feel at the present time it will be a combination of various type units. Mainly the present

tax structure we have. But when you throw in in the next couple of years, as it looks like we are going to have to do, a relook at the financing of the public education system in Texas, I feel like that . . . without having the benefit of a study that I know we will have by the time these decisions are made, it seems like the state will either have to get back into the ad valorem taxation by taking over the entire collection of school ad valorem taxes, or it may be a combination of the two and get into a state income tax. I think both of those are very real possibilities in order to meet the added responsibility that I understand we will have on the state level in order to finance education and the growing needs of the state.

Riddlesperger: Do you think the corporate income tax or profits tax as they call it will come some time before an individual income tax, or do you think they will come together?

Price: Well, it's kind of hard to say. Personally, I think they should come together because I think if you look at other states, what usually happens is that you come in with a corporate tax, and then it really gets out of line with other taxes. Then eventually the pressure

is put on to go to the personal. I think that if you go with both, you will have such a broad base that then you can treat it more business-like. Now politically, I think more than likely it will come the other way or will come the way it has done in other states. You'll come with a corporate first and then the personal. But I feel like it would be better business to go with both of them at once.

Riddlesperger: That's interesting. You have been identified generally with the more conservative forces in this state, although we realize those names don't mean anything too much in the actual operation of our system, but the individual income tax is looked upon by the liberal members as something that should not come at all in at least ten years. Is that mostly political on their part, do you think?

Price: Oh, I think so. I think it is purely political. Of course, I am a pragmatist when it comes to taxation. I feel that the first obligation of the Legislature is to finance state government, and so long as we stay within the general realm of fairness when we consider all sources of taxation, I don't get too concerned over the source from which it comes because I am kind of an

old-fashioned believer that people are the ones who eventually pay the taxes in any case. But, of course, because the people of Texas have always expressed such a strong dislike for a personal income tax is the reason I think that no matter what your political persuasion politically it is not a popular tax to think about passing.

Riddlesperger: Let's get down to a little more specifics on it. One of the things we people in political science are interested in is the power of the lobby in the state Legislature. The weakness of the political party, we often say, is that it gives strength to the lobby. Do you have any ideas on that?

Price: Oh, there may be some truth to that where you don't have other sources of power and resources. You look to those resources and powers that do exist, and the lobby is one of those. This is an area that I am strongly concerned with, although as a Democrat in Texas, I am not prepared to accept going to a two-party system as the total answer to the problem.

Riddlesperger: Well, the lobby in Texas is very powerful. One of the things that gives them power, apparently, is their campaign contributions, which is not necessarily

reported under certain circumstances we now have. What restrictions on the lobby in the campaigns and so on do you think should be put into law? Do you have any ideas on that?

Price: Well, actually the laws in the State of Texas on lobby control and also reporting campaign expenditures are, believe it or not, from dealing with legislators from other states, is one of the models that has been followed by other states. I feel like we do need to make some changes in that area, but the real answer as far as the Legislature is concerned in the imbalance of power between lobby and speaker and the leadership of the houses and the members is not so much more rules and regulations, but it's more resources and more facilities and knowledge for the members of the Legislature. I think that that is where power really lies in Texas, and I think that primarily the reason why the Legislature has been over-influenced by the lobby is not so much the campaign contributions made by lobbyists, but it's by the complete mis-balance between resources of knowledge and information during the Legislature. Too often, we have nobody else to rely on for information other than the lobby.

Riddlesperger: Looking on that angle, what reforms do you think should be made concerning annual sessions and pay of the Legislature and perhaps another reform of the committee structure of the Legislature?

Price: Well, now here is where I feel like the Texas Legislature has just got to make strong improvements. Now two of those are constitutional changes that the people of Texas are going to have to help us with. If the Texas Legislature is ever really going to be able to stand up on its hind legs and do what it is supposed to do, we are going to have to have annual sessions. Personally, I would rather have annual unlimited sessions, but I don't know that we'll have the prospects of getting that. But going hand in hand with that, of course, is the adequate pay for the members. You can't expect full-time representation without paying for it. Now what can be done and what I feel like what will be at least started this next session of the Legislature is a committee reorganization of the House in particular, and I hope the Senate will follow our lead. Reorganizing our committees to where we are dealing with areas of state and economic problems of the state rather than fractionalizing like we have it now. It is just not

economically feasible to give the resources to the type of committee structure we now have. But when you do get your basic committee structure to where it organizationally can . . . is dealing with broad areas of problems, then we can afford ourselves a staff and the expertise necessary on these committees to really, both during the interim and during session, get in and find out what the facts are and at least have the people we've hired find the facts for us rather than relying on the facts that somebody else hires. But I don't think we'll ever have what I consider a competent Legislature until we have in addition to this, annual sessions, where the time of the members is spent dealing with state problems.

Riddlesperger: That's an interesting problem. Two questions that have come up in recent years, last year particularly, is the matter of ethics and the matter of some reforms of the House rules. You are currently engaged in a campaign for speaker of the House. What basic reforms do you believe need to be done in the office of speaker?

Price: Well, some of the powers of the speaker need to be removed. I think we should go to a seniority system or what we in the Legislature call a limited seniority

system where a member once on a committee can retain membership on that committee. But I feel that with the turnover and the makeup of the Texas Legislature and not being a two-party state, we are not yet ready to go to a seniority system for chairmen. I think that should continue to be in the hands of the speaker. Then I feel like we have to . . . one of the things that need to be done badly is a formalizing of the campaign for speaker, to cut out the abuses of perpetuating a speaker being in a position of perpetuating himself in office through the power of the speaker. This, I think, will have to be done through legislation setting up a filing system, a reporting of campaign expenditures for speakers, and some sort of deadline in which you're either in the race or you're out of the race for speaker. This is a difficult thing to do when you are dealing with the limited constituency. As you know, now there are no guidelines. One day you can be a candidate for speaker, and the next day you don't have to report anything. There are really no formal guidelines at all for running. Now I feel again that the primary thing that needs to be done, at least as far as reform, is back to what we were discussing earlier--the committee organization and the strengthening of the positions of

individual members. I'm against weakening the leadership at the expense of the state just so we can put it in some sort of balance with the members. I want to strengthen the members to put them in the balance with a strong leadership because, again, we do have to do away with the abuses that are available to the speaker under the present system we work under.

Riddlesperger: Well, probably annual sessions with full pay would be greatly strengthening to the individual members, would it not?

Price: Oh, yes. Again, we get back to what I feel like is the basic source of power in the legislative body, and that is knowledge. A member who serves for 140 days every other year and then goes back home and spends the rest of his time almost totally on some other vocation is just not in position to compete full time with the speakers which we have had here before which have spent 100 per cent of their time on state business, and so that relationship is out of balance, as well as the relationship we mentioned before on the lobbyist who is a full-time employee. I think you can weaken the speakership, but I think you are doing it to the detriment of the state if you weaken it too

much because actually the speaker's office under present conditions is the only place where you have a continuing full-time working arrangement. Now I think going to a committee structure that I would like to see done, that is controlled by the members, even though they don't spend full-time, but they'll have hired expert employees who will spend full-time, will be a balance that we can make without going to annual sessions. But ultimately, I think, I agree with your statement that annual sessions is the only real answer to the power vacuum that you have between the membership and various other groups.

Riddlesperger: Do you believe that a speaker should run for re-election, or do you think that one term should be sort of a limit on it?

Price: No, I don't think that we should arbitrarily limit a speaker to one term. I've seen speakers that I wouldn't want to serve more than one term. And I think that it's a good tradition in Texas under our present political structure for speakers to traditionally limit themselves to two terms. But I think we'd be making a mistake. We'd be doing the thing that I've mentioned before. We'd be weakening the power of the

speaker to the point of losing the effectiveness of the Legislature for the people of Texas if we went to a one term limitation.

Riddlesperger: I noticed that there's been some recent steps taken on the staffing of the speaker's office and listing the number of people who work and listing of the number of people who work with the speaker and work under his direction. Do you have any ideas on the staffing of the speaker's office, of limitations on it or . . .

Price: Well, I think the present criticism is deserved. I think there is an incompetent staffing. I think that's probably the way I would put it more than maybe an over-staffing. There are too many bodies that the speaker has working for him, and I think they're not taking care of the duties that the speaker should be taking care of. They're evidently being used for political purposes and patronage. That, I don't think, should be done, though I think the speaker should have a competent staff, and whatever number it takes to do that, well, I think should be provided. And I think that's also true of all other members of the Legislature.

Riddlesperger: You mentioned a minute ago about reporting on the contributions for speakership campaigns. The cost of

the campaign, of course, wasn't anticipated when the office was set up this way. Does it cost a great deal to run for speakership?

Price:

Well, yes, it can and in my particular case has cost a pretty good amount. Of course, it's just like any other political race. It depends on what the competition is and what the circumstances are at the time you're running. I have been running for speaker now since the end of the session that convened in '69. So I started running in about May of '69, and over that extended period of time, you do a lot of traveling, you do a lot of meeting with the members all over the state, and it does get expensive. I've been asked to put a dollar figure on it before, and I said that it probably will take close to \$50,000 to run my race for speaker. That was a guess at the time. It still is a guess because we're now looking at another year, possibly in all of the political races in the state and having to go out and meet maybe 200 or 300 candidates for the Legislature in addition to the ones who finally get elected. So it does get expensive, but when you consider that it's one of the top three political offices in the state, it's really inexpensive compared to the race for governor and lieutenant governor.

Riddlesperger: Do you think that Texas should think of changing the lieutenant governor's office in any way?

Price: Well, of course, the political scientists--and I tend to agree in a way--under most constitutional reforms make the lieutenant governor, where you have lieutenant governors, not so powerful an office and set up your president pro tempore as president of the Senate and presiding office. They're much the same as your speaker who is a presiding officer, and that's where the real power lies. In Texas, I think up to now, it's worked very well like it is, but I feel like that one day when Texas really becomes truly a two-party state, I can see that with the lieutenant governor elected by the people and now answerable to the party in power in the Senate that you could have bad situations. You could have a loggerhead when you have one party controlling the Senate and the other party controlling the lieutenant governor. But at this time, politically, I don't think there's any reasonable prospect of change in the lieutenant governor.

Riddlesperger: Let's get back to some of the actual bills. Did you have anything much to do with the voter registration reform that passed this past session?

Price: No, I didn't serve on the committee, and I wasn't the author of the bill so the only participation I had was on the floor of the House.

Riddlesperger: Did you favor the bill that came, or did you have some reservations about it?

Price: Well, in principle I favored the bill. I feel that we're long past the time of requiring annual registration. There's some safeguards that I would have rather seen in the bill that are not in it, but I don't know whether you want to go into . . .

Riddlesperger: Yes, that's be fine to talk about maybe the one reservation that has been ruled unconstitutional, of course, regarding the people under twenty-one who were in college particularly, voting in their home district or the district of their parents. Did you have any feeling or ideas on that?

Price: Yes, I had some concerns and I think valid ones. I think I probably supported this unconstitutional provision in the bill. I felt, and I still feel, that there's some dangers involved, particularly in small college towns that you have in Texas like Nacogdoches and Huntsville and Commerce, not Denton so much as these other schools, because of the relative size of

the schools in the towns that there's a real possibility of having situations where the college kids actually take over the town, and I don't think that's right, and I'd like to see some way to avoid it, though I also understand the position of the college students, that if they're old enough to vote, they're old enough to establish where they're going to vote. But I would hope that we'll be able to work out some sort of compromise the next session of the Legislature where we can avoid the possibilities and the fears of some of the older people and the people in these type of towns and at the same time provide full citizenship for your below twenty-one.

Riddlesperger: Well, I'm personally sympathetic with that, and I assure you that a lot of us are. However, I believe that the college students are going to prove to be divided on most issues as the other people. So I think that the emphasis on that problem will fade away with time.

Price: I think that's very well true, and I surely hope so.

Riddlesperger: There's been a great deal of talk in recent times on the automobile insurance problem in Texas. In regard to that, of course, the no-fault idea. Have you had any ideas or anything to do with the legislation in this field?

Price: No, the Texas Legislature actually hasn't . . . well, there might have been bills introduced, but there hasn't been any action taken on a no-fault legislation. Now there have been studies made, and there's presently, I think, an interim committee studying the no-fault concept which has been discussed quite a bit. Right now I've got a wait-and-see attitude toward it. I have real misgivings about it, particularly since I'm a lawyer and trained in the idea that fault is the cause of liability. But on the other hand, if there's a system that we can have that will protect the people and at the same time be less expensive, then I'm certainly not closed on the subject. So what little I have learned about no-fault and know about it, it seems to be that all that it really is doing is you're just buying less product, that by limiting the liability naturally the cost goes down. So I'd like to see more experience in other states before the State of Texas jumps into it, if the Federal government doesn't force it on us before then.

Riddlesperger: Do you have any ideas on changing the system of regulation of the automobile insurance in Texas? There's been some criticism of it.

Price: Yes, there has and I've about come to the position that maybe Texas should go ahead and follow what most other states are doing and go to purely competitive rating, though I quite frankly have some misgivings about doing that because our rate structure under the system that we have outshines most of the states that have competitive ratings. But on the other hand, I think you have a political and a people problem involved in it, and if the people of Texas have lost confidence in their state agency to do it, well, then I feel that we should go to another system and let the people try something else.

Riddlesperger: I had in mind, too, one other . . . there's some kind of a policy for old people that is available in some states that someone told me about. It's about 25 per cent less than the rates for old people in Texas that would be available if we would change our system. Do you know anything about that?

Price: Well, generally what these things are is taking the cream of the crop and providing lower rates for them. In competitive rate states, a lot of times companies will set up on a particular type of people and be very selective in whom they sell it to, and, of course,

you have lower rates. But that really doesn't solve your problem of insurance because you're insuring people who don't need the insurance when you do that.

Riddlesperger: Yes, well, I think that's a good point.

Price: You're not spreading your base and that's one of the real problems with competitive rating because in that case you're leaving the companies to decide who they're going to write for. As a result, they take the cream and leave the people who cause the accidents uninsured.

Riddlesperger: I see. Yes, well, that's a good point. In the appropriations bill--we'll turn to that just a little bit--some members of the Legislature have talked that because of the limited session once every two years that the members of the Legislature seldom vote intelligently, that is, with any knowledge of what's in the appropriations bill. Will you comment on that problem as related to an appropriations bill?

Price: I think the statement is accurate to start with. I think that fully 90 per cent of the legislators vote without any real understanding of the overall expenditures. They know how the budget affects their district, but when you get outside of that, well, they know very little about it. Now I think that also takes

in 90 per cent of the Appropriations Committee itself. There's no real easy, democratic, and complete fool-proof method, I think, of budgeting for the state, but there has to be some changes made in the budgeting process. But I think even after you made them, you're still going to wind up with a majority of the members of the Legislature still not knowing because it's such a tremendous job of informing yourself that most members just don't have the time to do that and also take care of their other committee work that has to be done. But I feel that we do have to go to limiting the powers of the conference committee, for instance. I think that the members should at least have a chance to have a say in the budget-making, and as it is now, there's no real chance of a member affecting the budgeting process. The members can carry an amendment to the bill on the floor and have it approved by both the House and the Senate in their respective bills and then have it removed by the conference committee. Now that shouldn't be. It should be that at least the members have the opportunity to inform themselves and affect the budget-making. Now I don't think that you can write a budget on the floor of the House or the floor

of the Senate. I think it still is going to have to be a fairly controlled committee operation to come up with any sort of balanced budget.

Riddlesperger: The Texas system of budgeting, of course, which includes the bringing up of two budgets--one by the governor and one by the budget committee. What do you think should be done in this area? Should the governor make the sole budget, or do you think that that would give him too much power?

Price: No, I don't think that the governor's budget, and that being the only budget, is the best way. I like that part about our budget-making in Texas, and it's somewhat unique among the states. But the legislative budget is really the stronger document to start with. There's really abuses in the other states of the executive budgeting process. So that part, I tend to want to keep like it is. I think probably there should be some more influence from the governor's office on the budget-making, but I'm not prepared to turn it all over to him.

Riddlesperger: The conference committee problem, of course, you talked about a minute ago, which allows a conference committee to re-write a bill completely instead of just adjusting

the differences. What is your ideas on that? Do you think it should be limited to . . .

Price: Yes, that's what I was saying earlier. It should be limited to only working out the differences between the two houses with, of course, procedures by which oversights and emergency matters can be taken care of after the bill's been put into conference.

Riddlesperger: I noticed, in regard to not knowing what was in a bill, the Vending Commission thing. They talk about two or three things that this law created a tax loophole for a man who was appointed chairman. Do you have any comment on that--how that law got through that way?

Price: Yes, of course, not on that specific one, but it's generally the same problem that we have in so many areas that first of all it's resources, and secondly it's time. Anytime you're limited on the resources for finding out what things are really doing, and also limited on time, things like that are going to continue to happen. Well, I feel like the only way to really cure that is to just provide the Legislature with both the resources and the time to do the job that we're sent down there to do. Now in that particular bill . . . of course, there's been two of them, and I

don't know whether you mean the one that passed this session or the one that passed the session before the last, and it seems like in both cases there's been criticism about the law--the one that passed in 1969 that it didn't do what it was supposed to do, and I think also this one that has passed the past session. In both cases, and particularly in '69 since I was chairman of the committee that that was reported out of, that it was assigned to a subcommittee with Mr. Cory as chairman of it, who was chairman of the interim study committee on the bill, and if it does something different from what he thought it ought to do, I don't know why. That one I have some specific knowledge about, and I can't really imagine how that could have wound up being different from the way the interim committee really wanted it because Mr. Cory was chairman of the subcommittee.

Riddlesperger: Yes, now Dick Cory--that's who we're talking about--says that a report is being held up by the Department of Public Safety, which lists the irregularities in the vending machine business. Is there any way of getting this Department of Public Safety to release that report?

Price: Well, I think there is. I think the grand jury could call for that report and have it delivered, and also

it was a legislative committee that I understand was the one that made that report and just turned it over to them for safekeeping, and if there's something there, well, I think a legislative general investigative committee could subpoena it. But whether there's anything there or not, I don't know.

Riddlesperger: Cory apparently released a statement to the press to the effect that . . . he was complaining about that.

Price: Yes, I saw the headlines. But if there's something criminal in it, I don't really think that the Department of Public Safety's holding anything that would have any criminal liability involved in it.

Riddlesperger: Now going back to one of the biggest problems that Texas faced now, and that's in regard to the scandals that have hit Texas politics, where very prominent members of the state Legislature and even the governor and the lieutenant governor were involved. Now I know Senator Hall up in my area claims to have introduced some good ethics bills. What do you believe should be done in the field of ethics by legislation?

Price: Well, let's get back to this specific problem starting there. I don't think that under this specific problem, that we particularly need any more laws dealing with

ethics. What we needed was a more and a surer procedure of enforcing it. Of course, in a sense, it's been pretty well enforced as far as the speaker's concerned because he was indicted and will stand trial before a jury. Now you can't get much more definite enforcement than that. But as far as the Legislature's concerned, we were in a untenable position of trying to set up some sort of committee or some sort of procedure by which to look into a matter after it occurred and the worst was that it was the leadership of the House that was involved in it. Therefore, the standard and usual methods of doing it through just simple investigating committees wouldn't and didn't work. Now what I'd like to see, and what I hope to get instituted while I'm speaker is a committee that is elected by the members outside of the control of any appointments, with full powers to look into any sort of irregularities as far as any of the activities of any member of the Legislature or any activity before the Legislature, and with powers to . . . well, with the same powers as a grand jury to be able to investigate. Now if we would have had such a committee, which was not controlled by the speaker, but was statutorily given the duty and the

authority to look into it, well, then we wouldn't have had the big flap, the big argument, over how you're going to do it. They would have just automatically instituted an investigation and would have either made a report that something should be done, or in this case, I think probably they would have found, as far as the speaker was concerned, that it was a criminal matter, that the thing to do would have been for the grand jury to do what the grand jury eventually did. But it left a bad taste in everybody's mouth by having a situation that there wasn't a solution to one \_\_\_\_\_ way of getting at. I feel that this, as far as the Legislature's concerned, is the first thing that needs to be done.

Now further matters on ethics, I feel like that a reasonable financial disclosure procedure maybe would be good, and particularly now with the public sentiment as it is. I've always felt that there are some truly . . . well, some detrimental things that can come from it. One is if you're required too much in the reporting, then you can run people off from serving in public office. I think we've done that here under the bill that we've passed. I think we've made it much too broad and many people with extensive

financial holdings that you'd want to serve on state agencies are just not going to put it out to public scrutiny just to serve on a really honorary position. I think you can carry that to where it'd be that bad as far as the Legislature is concerned. But I think that reasonable financial disclosure provisions need to be done, and I don't know that there's a great deal other than enforcement that we really need. We've got some pretty good laws on things you're not supposed to do.

Riddlesperger: That comes back, of course, to this thing we were talking about awhile ago: the lobby. We have a good law to require the lobby to make reports that . . . one thing about this, it seems like the secretary of state has announced that he's going to insist upon a listing of contributions. Do you think that that should be furthered still in requiring the lobby to list what they do all year around instead of just during the session and in detail, where they get the money, and so on?

Price: Yes, I think that it should. The whole problem with all of the various reportings, the contribution reportings, the expenditures of lobbyists . . . the real problem in all of it is the enforcement angle of it--how do you go about being sure that your opponent,

particularly, for instance, in a political race, that every candidate has to face is deciding, well, now is my opponent telling the truth all the way, and what are the political consequences of my telling the truth and him not? It's almost an impossibility of knowing. Of course, that's going to always be involved in the reporting, and it's one of those things that I think the only thing we can do is what we did do and just make it a crime if you don't and you take your chances of getting caught if you decide not to live by it. But what I'm saying is that even though you put the laws there, that the enforcement of it is almost an impossibility. That's been my experience. So I truly don't know the answer because I don't know that there is an answer that you can be sure that it will work out. So you just leave it up to . . . when somebody gets caught, well, you hope it will steer somebody from doing it the next time. Of course, there's never been anybody prosecuted that I know of, and I think that's true in either the lobby reporting or the campaign expenditures reporting.

Riddlesperger: One other issue that comes to my mind is the politics of redistricting the state Legislature. How able is

the Legislature really to do this job? Some people turn it over to commissions entirely. Do you think that there should be some reforms in this?

Price: Well, to start off, I don't know that there's any real good way of redistricting. I feel personally at this present time that it should remain in the hands of the Legislature. I can't see that the commission that redistricted did any better job than the Legislature could have done if we'd been set up on a little better basis than we were this session. The bill that the Legislature did pass, I thought, was ridiculous, and I voted against it and opposed it, but on the other hand, I've seen the Legislature do as good a job as I think you could do in redistricting. I'm kind of lukewarm on the question, I guess. I can see maybe some advantages of a . . . though if you're going to set up a commission to do it, I think you probably need to figure out as well as you can some nonpolitical commission to do it.

Riddlesperger: We people up at Denton live next to Dallas, and we've seen in one particular bill the creation of the University of Texas at Dallas . . . we faced, at that time, fifteen members of the Legislature elected as a

whole, and our representatives, of course, being opposed to it, well, it didn't make much difference. What's your feeling on single member districts in the House?

Price: Well, in theory, I suppose single member districts . . . I think that it's really the only way to have representative government. Right at this particular time, running for speaker, with the support of major delegations, I'll be honest and say that politically I'd rather see it stay like it is right now. But if it was up to me to make a decision that we would have all single member districts, I think I would without the political situation that I'm in I would favor it (laughter).

Riddlesperger: I appreciate that, I appreciate that. Of course, the big thing is the campaign expenses of running in a district of 1,200,000 people.

Price: That is a consideration, but that's really illusory in a lot of ways. With single member districts within a metropolitan area like this, I think that it would probably be found that campaign expenditures will probably be just as great as they were when they were running at large. For one thing, if you're going to

use television, you got to buy the whole market whether you're running there or not. Now you can, I guess, try to run a door-to-door or house-to-house campaign. But it costs as much to run in a senatorial district, say. The expenditures have been as much or more in metropolitan areas as it has run country-wide. So I think that you can't really be sure that that would be the outcome.

Riddlesperger: Well, that's interesting. Of course, I've got a great deal of prejudice against the Dallas system from several angles. So now we've made a lot of interesting observations here. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make on any general legislative reorganization?

Price: Yes, there's one area that we haven't covered that I want to see worked on and I think we've made some progress in, and that's a more cooperative relationship between the two houses of the Legislature. I'd like to see us adopt parallel committees between the two houses. By that I mean if you have a committee dealing with environmental matters in the House, well, then you have a parallel committee in the Senate dealing with the same areas. If you have a Criminal Jurisprudence

Committee, say, in the House, well, also have one in the Senate. What I'd like to see done then is a cooperation in the setting of bills for consideration, joint studying of problems facing the state, and I feel like that we can both save the Legislature and the public of Texas a lot of time and energy. Many matters, bills, that are being considered by both houses, just consider them jointly rather than having two hearings--one one week and another another week--with the double cost and expense to the people testifying and also to the members of the committee. I feel like that this particularly is needed in the budgeting processes. It's going to be kind of a radical proposal, but I am going to try to work toward having a joint appropriations hearing and consideration and then come out with one bill. You won't have two separate bills--one a House bill, one a Senate bill--but one bill that will be the budget of the state and then considered by each house. That way, you start out with the same basic document, and then you get back to . . . I think this will help solve the problems of your conference committee that we discussed earlier. If you have one basic budgetary document coming out of

committee and considered by the two houses, well, then each house can make their amendments as they see fit and then go to conference and work on the differences between the amendments that have been passed by the two houses. It seems to me that that would be the most business-like way and the most democratic way of dealing with the budgetary problem. Quite frankly, I don't know what kind of opposition that there's going to be to that. I think there will be some, to say the least. But these are things that I feel need to be done quite badly--we have had too little cooperation and working and organizational interrelation between the two Houses of the Legislature.

Riddlesperger: That's a very interesting suggestion, and I haven't heard it talked on much. What kind of opposition--from the lobby or from certain members--when you were talking about opposition to this idea?

Price: No, I don't think it's the lobby so much. The lobby really doesn't affect appropriations all that much. By the lobby, I'm talking about the generally thought-of lobby, the business lobby, for instance, of course, the teacher's lobby, they have . . . they get pretty . . . and your colleges, your lobbies representing the

colleges, of course, are very influential. No, I think that there would be some opposition from the agencies themselves, the executive agencies. They have gotten into a position of playing one house off against the other. This way I don't think that you'd be able to do that the way it's been done heretofore because we have each chairman, it seems like, of both Houses and Senate, members of the committee, have some pet agency. And if an agency can't get it in the Senate bill, they'll go over and try to get it in the House bill and then get their foot in the door or get the House conferees to get it put in in conference, or the Senate conferees, and then be able to swap out on it. I think there would be opposition probably from sources there. I think the members of the committee itself would probably . . . for instance-- which if I'm speaker won't happen--should Mr. Heatly be chairman of the Appropriations again, I don't think he would like it a bit. It takes away the domain, I think, of the chairman somewhat.

Riddlesperger: I was interested in this because it does open up one other question that I wanted to discuss, and that's constitutional reform. This freedom of these agencies

from any kind of controls except budgetary could only be ended by some kind of constitutional reform. How far along do you think the possibility of constitutional reform is? Now we hold an amendment election, but what are the possibilities now?

Price: I think that the possibilities of a complete constitutional re-write and adoption are really not too good. The experience in Maryland and New York and several other states that . . . the last ones that have presented full constitutional re-writes have all gone down to failure. The approach that I feel like we can take and should take is deciding where the real problems in our constitution are and working on those. Of course, being in the Legislature, I feel like the legislative branch of government is the one that needs the first attention for several reasons. One is that if you can get a Legislature with annual sessions with pay and providing the time that's necessary to see after it, well, there can be a lot of controls and a lot of checks made on the executive and on the agencies that now don't have control, just through the power of appropriations and through regulations that we can bring to bear as statutory law. Then the second area,

I think, is the executive branch, is doing away with the type of governing of . . . well, without control. You said it correctly with the type of appointments we have and the boards that control the various agencies, there's really very little that can be done to control them. I think probably, though, we've gotten better than we deserved from most of them. But the public really has very little power that they can bring to bear on them. You can elect the governor, and he can serve . . . he has to serve for at least three terms before he can get control of those agencies, and that shouldn't be.

Then, I think, separately could be treated the judiciary section of the constitution. I feel like taking them one at a time would be the best prospect of getting anything done. Of course, then there's a bunch of general areas of the constitution that there should be some changes in. But I don't feel like that they really are of such importance as to put in jeopardy the real active part of the government that needs to be changed through constitutional reform.

Riddlesperger: And even that probably will take some strong leadership at the top from the governor and others to favor some real action in this area.

Price: Oh, yes. I think our best prospects of making a meaningful constitutional reform is in the legislative and possibly in the judiciary branches. I think that we should do the legislative first before we ever worry about the executive.

Riddlesperger: Thank you very much, Mr. Price. I think that the library at North Texas and the other groups that will get these comments will find them very useful. I want to express my personal appreciation to you, and I know that the Oral History Collection will also want me to express theirs.

Price: Well, I appreciate the interview.