

But I was able to get that order rescinded before the week was over.

After Congress quit last year we had about \$60 million that the President could release for VA activities if he wanted to and I was deperately trying to get him to do this, to use for a new hospital down in Kentucky and for some renovation and air conditioning of other hospitals, and a number of things like that, and he wouldn't do it.

I was down in Texas and received an invitation to come to the White House for a bill signing and, of course, I accepted it right quick and planned for this opportunity to argue a little about the \$60 million, and sent word I wanted to talk with him. Now many of you know that when you went to President Johnson and asked him for something you didn't leave until you promised him something in return.

Congress was out of session. He had announced that he wasn't a candidate. On the plane coming up that night I tried every way I could to figure out what on earth he could ask me for this time.

So we got to the White House next day and as I went in the door Jimmie Jones said that there were some things happening in Paris and that Secretary Rusk was asking to talk to him and he couldn't talk to me.

So, as he was signing the bill I said, "Mr. President, I want you to release that \$60 million."

He didn't say a word and didn't acknowledge hearing me and I said, "If you don't, it may take us 10 years to get that money back."

So, I turned and started to walk away and he said, "I want to talk to you."

So, we went in the office and he sat down in his rocking chair and he said, "OK," he said, "You are going to get your money, but you have to promise this." And I thought, "Well, now, what on earth could he ask me to promise at this time?"

So his statement then was that Bill Driver was the best administrator in his government and that he wanted me to promise—this was before the election—that I would contact Mr. Nixon and Mr. Humphrey and make them promise that they would keep Bill Driver, and that was his request and as far as I was concerned it was easy to say, "Yes, I'll do that."

And we got our \$60 million. Since that time I have had a conversation with Mr. Nixon and I am certainly sure that he will be just as strong a supporter of our veterans programs as President Johnson was.

I think you will also see that he won't inject politics into our veterans program.

With that, commander, it is again good to have the VFW here and we look forward to seeing you tonight.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, may I introduce a gentleman I forgot among our national officers. I overlooked him, Dr. Joe Lever from Georgia. I am sorry about that.

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Again it is good to have you on Capitol Hill. I think we should have offered to come downtown when we couldn't find a place big enough.

Mr. HOLT. We may have to do that next year, Mr. Chairman. Keep it in mind.

Mr. TEAGUE. If so, we will do it.

Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the committee was adjourned.)