

Irving Swanson

Congressman Merlin Hull of Wisconsin

Description of a meeting with Congressman Merlin Hull of Wisconsin.

Interview recorded July 27, 2004

A Page boy came down to get me. He said, "You're wanted on the phone." So I went back and it was Bess on the phone and she said, "The boss would like to talk to you." Merlin must have been in his late eighties at that time. She said, "The boss would like it if you..." And I said, "Well, Bess, we're going to quit here now in about 15, 20 minutes." And I said, "I'll be right over." She said, "No, can you come right away?" So, that was enough to just make me say, anyway someone else would have my place. I wasn't reading clerk at that time. And, so I went over there and she said, "Go, right on in." She was the only person in the office. And Mr. Hull was sitting back in his...those big leather chairs. Did you ever see those black leather chairs? Sitting back there. He says, "Sit down Irving." So, I sat down and he looked at me and he says, "How would you like to take my place?" He was the undisputed king of the district. In other words, he would win by 92 percent and all that sort of thing. And, you know, I was just a punk at that time. I, maybe I moved too fast. I don't know. But anyway, I told him, I said, "Mr. Hull, I certainly appreciate..." because he loved the district, if you know what I mean. I said, "I appreciate your confidence in me, what you think. But," I says, "I think I've got a better job than you." Can you imagine that? "Well," he said, "Look," he said, "I'm getting so damned old." And he said, "I love this district," and he says, "I want someone to be able to take of it that will follow through." So, he died about six months later. So, he was, in effect, felt as though he was at the end of his life.