
I am pleased to have been asked to participate in this Public Affairs Conference, particularly to join Chairman Wayne Aspinall and Congressman Bizz Johnson, and my good friends Bill Sullivan and Bill Royce.

Once it might have been considered improper for a meeting like this to take place. Government and business were considered to be in separate worlds, to speak separate languages, and by and large to be adversaries.

President Johnson has reached into the ranks of business for his top appointees, and business returns the compliment. Advisory Councils contribute to the work of almost every Department.

We are not giving away trade secrets; we are working toward common objectives.
Bill Jobe and Ralph Hodges came to my office a few days ago to brief me on today's panel. Thereby, they demonstrated at least one practical aspect of the panel topic assigned to me—how to work with the executive branch. For they undertook to be helpful, and they were helpful.

You've heard several people speak on different aspects of a common theme. Whatever differences may appear to distinguish the work or approach of the executive and legislative branches, or the work or approach of member and staff, or policy-maker and technician, they cannot obscure basic similarities.

The people involved are products of our system and they believe in it; by and large they have a considerable breadth of personal experience and understanding; and they are mature and sophisticated enough to be unafraid of talking with
representatives of interest groups like yours.

This being the case, they are likely to respond or to be repelled in roughly the same way to the same things.

Some things go without saying—they won't tolerate being lied to or misled; they are suspicious of oversimplification; and they are not open to bribe or subject to threat.

On a more affirmative note, they welcome facts. Nothing smoothes the way for the presentation of facts quite so well as an evident willingness to present accurately and fairly the other side's contentions about what the facts mean as well as your own.

But what kind of facts? In what detail should they be prepared, and how should they be presented?

It is the duty of a government official who
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The first requirement of successfully confronting an executive department official will be measured by the degree to which you can convince him of your ability to put yourself in his shoes. You cannot ask a government official to do something that is illegal or illegitimate and—more importantly, you cannot ask him to do something that appears to be illegitimate. I cannot make a decision simply because it is good for the lumber industry, or good for a particular State, or even because it is good for a region of the country. I must make decisions that are good for the whole country; if they fit that definition, they will benefit a region, a State and an industry.
administers programs which have an impact on the private sector of the economy to know how that business actually works. Without such knowledge, he cannot make fair decisions.

This means that your homework may have to be varied. A presentation which would be ABC simple to one assistant secretary might be so much Greek to another. A presentation which might be vastly interesting and intriguing to one man might well be boring to another. When you get into technical fields, you will find the policy officials fit no pattern.

Some policy officials—I'm one of them—suspect that a lot of policy decisions are hidden in the recesses of the bureaucracy, and we think this is not right. Therefore, we like to do as much of our own homework as possible, where policy disputes center in technical areas, forestry for me.
I do not raise the question of whether government timber should be sold on a scale or cruise basis for its own sake, but rather to your several different points:

One is the simple one, that you can be helpful to the policy executive in educating him.

A second is that you've got to evaluate and both his need for, a willingness to absorb, education and information. Your approach to a policy official with sound knowledge of whether he's been briefed by his staff, and what he's been told by his staff, will make your confrontation with him more direct and useful. Don't ask him to tell you what recommendations have been given to him.

But what if you find from the vantage point of your own knowledge that policy decisions are being made at lower levels? What you do about that will depend on a lot of things which can't be developed here.
You may try to get your policy decisions resolved at the staff or technical levels by helping to bury the decision making process in the bureaucracy on the basis that the decision is technical. You will be tempted, and feel that you are better off to let the staff or the technicians act as decision maker, even on occasion when it goes against you, feeling that on percentages you will be ahead. I

I think the process is dangerous.

Policy decisions should be made where policy responsibility lies—first of all in the Congress, and within legislative mandate with the officials who must be responsive to the constitutional system of checks and balances. Decisions buried in the bureaucracy, even favorable ones, erode the system.

The last point is that you must know about
the executive branch's system of discipline. You can't expect a cabinet officer to oppose his president, an assistant secretary to oppose his secretary, a bureau chief to oppose his department. All of them sometimes do, privately or publicly. Private opposition is a part of the responsibility of government; public opposition is too much for you to ask.

The most important single postulate for effective political action—at any level—is a recognition that both sides must be treated as if each is motivated by worthy goals, representing valid points of view.

Government, industry, social questions—the fabric is much too complex to permit of the comfortable simplicity of earlier days. Lumber men are not intent on a policy of "cut-out and get-out"—they are as interested in good forest practices as
the most dedicated non-commercial conservationist. Though public issues often give the appearance of statements of clearly opposing principles, it is rare occurrence that public officials have the opportunity for making the convenient choice between right and wrong. Decisions are between one right and another right, both of which are probably also in part wrong.