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Date: 11/19/83

WATKINS

WATKINS, ARTHUR (OH-125) 98 pages PRCQ (M)

Senator from Utah 1947-59; member 1959-60, and Chief Commissioner 1960-68, Indian Claims Commission.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. Family background. Attendance at Columbia University Law School. Commented on entry into politics; influence of coal miner's strike on his decision to run for U.S. Senate in 1946; expressed concern over labor situation and mentioned his support of Taft-Hartley Act. Discussed in some detail the Eisenhower administration's immigration program and his trip abroad to explain the program; commented on Arab refugees and his recommendation for reclamation program in Middle East. Cited President Eisenhower's support for Colorado River Project; talked about controversy over project, especially conservationists' opposition to Echo Park Dam. Mentioned Eisenhower's desalination proposal for Middle East and John Foster Dulles' lack of enthusiasm for the idea. Discussed his service on Indian Claims Commission and related his role in establishing a Navajo school; described political opposition to funding the school; commented on Congressman John Tabor and Clarence Cannon; also commented on Barry Goldwater; Watkins discussed his own support for Indians. Characterized President Eisenhower. Considerable discussion of Presidential and Congressional war powers; related his opposition to President Truman's sending troops to Korea in 1950 without congressional authorization; mentioned Watkins' suggestion to President Eisenhower that he (Eisenhower) consult with Congress before taking similar action in Indochina; mentioned Formosa Resolution; remarked about President Johnson and Vietnam. Mentioned briefly Watkins' newspaper publishing activities. Discussed the use of Mexican laborers in Western fruit farms and commented on labor unions. Some remarks regarding President Johnson and reclamation projects. Discussed his planned book. Discussed Senator Joseph McCarthy: personal behavior and characteristics, public support, and censure by the Senate. Commented briefly on Senator John Williams of Delaware. Included in interview text of commendatory letter from Senator Pat McCarran.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by Ed Edwin, 1968]