

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Jack Katsumi Suwa

Jack Katsumi Suwa was born August 25, 1924 in Pa'auiilo, Hawai'i. He was educated at Hilo High School, Hilo Vocational School, Army Officer Candidate School in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and Army Ordnance School. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1948.

Suwa worked as a garage foreman and cane planter. He was an employee of Amfac Sugar Company subsidiary for many years, and became Amfac's director of industrial relations in 1973, rising to assistant vice president in 1979.

Suwa was elected to the territorial house in 1958 as a Democrat. He continued serving as a state house representative through 1979. He was a delegate to the constitutional convention in 1968.

Tape Nos. 17-102-1-91 and 17-103-1-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jack Suwa (JS)

June 10, 1991

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

Joy Chong: The following is an interview with Jack Suwa, S-U-W-A. It took place at the [Hawai'i State] Department of Agriculture building, on June 10, 1991. The interviewers were Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto and Dan Tuttle. This is tape number one.

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Jack Suwa, on June 10, 1991, in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The interviewers are Dan Tuttle and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. And what we're gonna do is that we'll do an interview of your life, your political career, your political observations, and we will transcribe the interview, and make that transcript available to you, and you can go through it and delete or add whatever you want. And after we have your approval, we will make the transcript and the corresponding videotape available to the public for educational purposes.

JS: Fine.

MK: I guess we can start with when and where you were born.

JS: Well, first I want to thank [you for] this opportunity to at least leave some memento or whatever you call it, for the future generation. And I'm very proud that—to be asked.

DT: I'm quite certain they'll enjoy it. And it's a pleasure to see you again, especially for me. I haven't seen you for a long time.

JS: Thank you. That's right, goes a long way back.

DT: So now that we've done the amenities, let's start with your birth date and place.

JS: Yes. I was born about forty miles from Hilo, a place called Pa'auilo, the town of Pa'auilo, in the Hāmākua district, on August 25, in 1924.

DT: Okay, and you grew up there, did you, in the early years, or were you just born there and had to move elsewhere, or . . .

JS: Well, my life actually starts at age five, strangely, primarily because I was adopted to Mr. and Mrs. Suwa. My parents were Mr. and Mrs. Harumatsu Ebata, and at age five, I was

adopted to Mr. and Mrs. Chuzo Suwa. And now, all of those things came about when I was serving in the army, and I was called back. My real mother, Mrs. Ebata, was really sick, and that's when she told me the reason why I was adopted. So all my life starts on the day, at age five, from Pa'auilo, ride in the motor car, and there were some high bridges that the motor car have to cross, and they had couple tunnels. And when you reach the town of Hilo, all of a sudden, there was a street with two sides, stores, and all the toys and whatever you can think of, which didn't have in the town of Pa'auilo. There were couple stores, and that was the street.

DT: All of a sudden, you reached the big city then.

JS: That is right. So that . . .

DT: That means that you were adopted when you were five years old.

JS: That is right.

DT: And had you realized this when you were in the military, or you didn't really realize it?

JS: Well, the only reason I found out was at the grade school, I was told to bring my birth certificate.

DT: Oh, I see.

JS: And peeping that, I found that, oh, different parents. On that birth certificate, has the stamp, "Legally adopted." So I had to go through the dictionary to find the meaning of adoption. So that's when that really dawned on me that I was adopted. But strange [thing] is this, having to get on the motor car, train, and crossing the high bridge and the tunnel, and coming to Hilo, all my memories, the past, has been erased. So I'm very sensitive [during] my career in the legislature, when you talk about psychiatrists, you know, and adoption, I was very sensitive to it.

DT: Must have been very traumatic for you, wasn't it?

JS: That is right.

DT: For a young person, I would think it'd be devastating, because you didn't learn about it except through just looking at your own [birth] certificate.

JS: Yes, and strangely enough, when we go to school, I was teased as being adopted. Here, Mrs. Suwa said that I was her child, and shows the stomach, that I came from there, here's the navel, you know, and all those things. I believed it. Those days, we didn't have kindergarten, our first day of school was first grade. The girls used to tease me in the grade school as being adopted, and I flew my handle. I always go after the girls and, you know, lick them. On the way back, the girls would stop at Mrs. Suwa's and tell them that I was naughty, you know, hitting them. Then she asked me why do I do that? And here, I cannot tell her. So it's one of those things. So when you talk about adoption, whether you should tell the child or not, those are the things I'm very sensitive.

DT: I would think so, yeah.

MK: You know, the Ebatas and the Suwas, what do you know about their backgrounds?

JS: Well, all I know is that after being adopted, [I] visited [the Ebatas] twice a year, in New Year's and August, when they have [the festival] Japanese call *O-Bon*. We had four brothers and three sisters, they never once said (I was adopted to the Suwas). (I guess they) were instructed not to tell me [about the adoption]. (Strange things happened to me) because the shock of having to ride the motor car and the high bridges (to going through the tunnels completely) erased (my) memory [of life before the adoption]. Although, at a later date, Mr. Suwa said (because) he was a very religious man, he used to pray every morning, every night, that they be blessed with a child. And so that reason, he tells, at least for conversation purposes, later on, that, you know, [they were] blessed with a child [and] my memory or whatever it was, no longer associate with the Ebatas.

DT: So you grew up, really, then as an only child.

JS: That is right, to the Suwas. And strangely enough, this was told at the bedside by Mrs. Ebata. She says that, oh, they were gonna try, you know. The Suwas asked. They wanted a child. I guess they were some close relative, you know, and same prefecture from Japan so naturally, they knew [each other]. So my mother, Mrs. Ebata, says, "We didn't give you away because we were poor (or) we had plenty of children. It's not that. You volunteered to take a vacation, (and) take a look. And you left—," you know, there [was] no word [from JS or the Suwas]. The parents thought that, oh, in a week's time, certainly [they will] have a call to come get me.

No calls at all. So she decided to come over. It's forty miles, so it takes a good half a day of traveling to reach to Hilo and back to Kurtistown. She came over and my first word to her was, "Hello *obasan*." *Obasan* means lady, right?

So she was shocked that I forgot that she was my mother, you know? So definitely---so the day that she saw me being happy, she decided to go home. So she tells me that she cried all the way back, thinking that, how in the world that at age five I would forget the brothers and sisters and the parents? Very strange.

DT: I imagine that you grew up then really feeling that you should have been told, so you would have known love on both sides of the . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: . . . avenue shall we say. There was love from your natural parents and love from your adopted parents.

JS: That's right. That's right.

DT: And you'd have felt much more, probably, happy, than having it sort of hidden from you.

MK: And the Suwas that lived in Hilo, what kind of work were they in?

JS: They were farmers, cane planters. They had some farm, which was nice, that gave me an opportunity to work on Saturdays, you know, to help the parents in the afternoon.

MK: And were the Suwas involved in a lot of community activities?

JS: Well, as far as that, he a was very religious man and was respected in the village, so he was always trying to help others, the church and everything. So I grew up in a surrounding of community spirit, so as I finished the elementary school and went down to Kea'au Intermediate School and on to high school, I always took part in Boy Scouts and church. And later, I became the scoutmaster for the Troop (36), one of the famous troops in Kurtistown.

MK: And when you were going to the schools in Hilo, did you participate in, say, political activity at the school level, student government or anything like that?

JS: No, I was quite shy because, as we started out, we were quite handicapped, especially myself, because my parents didn't speak English at all. At age five, [little] English was spoken, so all my (learning) had to be at first grade, starting to learn English. Prior to that, was strictly pidgin English and everything, so I had a hard time.

DT: You had to travel to Hilo High [School], or did you move into town, or . . .

JS: No, we traveled. There was a bus. In our days, from Kurtistown to 'Ōla'a School, which now is Kea'au [Elementary and Intermediate] School, but has about three to four miles. In the morning, we were able to catch a bus because the bus took some high school students from Volcano, Mountain View, to Hilo High, so we had room to get on. But on the way back, it doesn't tie in with the Hilo High School hours, and that of the—so we had to walk. And we had to walk about three miles to a [Japanese-]language school in Kurtistown. So we spent [an] hour every day, and Saturday, four hours, going to Japanese school to learn about history and values.

MK: What kind of values did you learn about in the Japanese-language school setting?

JS: Well, started out with all those textbooks, of course, starting with *Momotaro*, *Kintaro*, and all those things. Later on, even the history book of the President of United States, the cherry trees and all of those things, the value was taught, and respect [for] the parents [was taught]. Every Saturday was known as [day for] the *shūshin* [instruction] of Japanese. In the morning, it was the day of cleaning the yard, the schoolyard, and we started out that way.

MK: And, you know, in your community of Kurtistown, who do you think had influence or power? What was your observation of how the community was set up?

JS: The community was set up [by the] elderly that took leadership and who were primarily [in a] church setting. They were the molding factor of a community. That's the reason why they had churches throughout the areas. I think they were the backbone of the community.

MK: And then, ethnically, was it a mixed community or primarily Japanese, or . . .

JS: Our area is primarily Japanese and—because they had some camps, the Filipino camps, (and other) laborers so (it) was scattered, you know, mixed.

- MK: And you mentioned that the Suwas were cane planters, that's *ukeoi-shi* then, contract . . .
- JS: Yes, yes. They had leased land and they raised cane, and harvesting time come around—the plantation bought that cane. It's a contract, yes.
- MK: So for Kurtistown, were most of the people cane cultivators then?
- JS: Yes. Where---area in Kurtistown were eleven to twelve miles area of primarily cane planters, and (most) were employed with the 'Ōla'a Sugar Company.
- DT: When you talk about community, this didn't extend to politics. Politics was pretty much the prerogative of somebody other than your AJA [American of Japanese Ancestry] community, right?
- JS: Well, politics, later on, after I finished my high school and vocational school, went into plantation, employed as a mechanic, you know, then got into politics, helping others, like Senator [Thomas] Okino [territorial senate 1950–54, 1951–59], at that time, and "Doc" [William] Hill [state and territorial senate 1932–70] was running also. I got to know (them). Because I was tied in with scouting and community, they asked for my help to pass brochures, and I started out that way, passing out brochures.
- DT: This is mostly with Democrats then. People like Okino or Martin Pence [County of Hawai'i attorney, 1939–45] or somebody.
- JS: That is right. Because of my father, I leaned toward the Democrat. Although, at that time, you know, Democrats cannot get into the plantation camp. You cannot campaign in there. Only time you could campaign, the Democrats, was out in the street, in front of the courthouse. And all I know is that if you want to be employed at the plantation as an office worker, or whatever it is, you have to sign a Republican card. I didn't sign no Republican card because I was a mechanic, you know. And then, later on, became unionized. About that time, I became a supervisor. I had not signed. So when I was asked, I got into politics primarily because of the reapportionment. Puna was entitled to a seat and the communities, the Democrat especially, didn't have (any)one that could beat the Republican, which was assistant manager of the plantation.
- DT: Yeah, this was much later.
- JS: Yeah.
- DT: This was in the late [19]50s because this was the one man, one vote decision.
- JS: Yeah, that's right.
- DT: But did you finish high school, or did you go to work? It sounds like you went to work before you finished high school.
- JS: No. No, I finished high school.
- DT: You finished high school.

JS: That's right.

DT: [Tape inaudible] vocational school.

JS: Yes, vocational.

DT: And then you went to work before WWII came along.

JS: (After.)

MK: You know, you mentioned that you leaned towards the Democrats because of your father, and I was wondering, can you explain that little bit?

JS: Well, my father was always for little man, you know, working in the community. He always helped the underdog. Even how poor he was, he borrowed money to (help) that person doesn't lose the rent or the lease or whatever it is. That's the type [of person he was]. He would get into his own financial difficulty, but he used to help them. And he was respected for that, so naturally, anything for the old man.

MK: And then you mentioned that you were asked to help in the campaigns of, say, Tom Okino and Doc Hill.

JS: Yes. Yes. What I mean is at that time, Doc Hill was (Republican). Tom Okino, (being Democrat), I chose to support (him), you know, because Senator Hill could walk in any plantation and you would have enough office supervisors or whatever it is to campaign for them [the Republicans], so the Democrats needed help.

DT: Can you think of any other Democrat back in your high school days, before World War II, that you helped besides Tom Okino?

JS: Oh yes, board of supervisors, such as "Scrub" [Hiroshi] Tanaka and many others.

MK: You know, in those days, was there a Democratic party on the Big Island? Martin Pence once told us that in the early days, there was just a small handful that would even meet.

JS: That's right. That's right. There was no organized party when we started out, it's just that they'll come over and ask for their help. So we pitched in, is about all.

DT: Yeah, well, prior to World War II, you couldn't have expected at sixteen or seventeen, or eighteen years of age, to become a leader of the Democratic party, they probably wouldn't invite you to their meetings, such as they were probably.

JS: That's right.

MK: But you were active in Boy Scouts and other community activities so . . .

JS: Church activities.

MK: . . . through those activities that you had contacts that they wanted you to use?

JS: That's right, that is right.

MK: And I know that you went to [Hawai'i] Vocational School, what were you planning on, as you . . .

JS: Well, here again, there's a story behind that. As I finished my ninth grade and thought of being a trade [worker], in other words, trying to be a machinist, a mechanic, something to do with hands. And that was my first preference, as I chose the subject. The second choice was business, math, typing and bookkeeping, those sort of things. But strangely enough, when I went to first day for registration and I didn't get that shop [class], and I got bookkeeping, typing, and this and that, I asked for a change. But later on, I found out that my counselor at ninth grade said my IQ [intelligence quotient] was high, that only those who cannot make it goes to machine shop or being a mechanic, so it's not my career, so I had a hard time changing it. Matter of fact, one day, the only reason why---and also, strangely enough, my brother, who was going to Honoka'a, somehow he jumped grade, and he was same class with me, typing. And here I was with my farming hand and trying to use the typewriter, try to synchronize with the music. And here is my kid brother typing away. So I said, ah, this is not for me, I gotta go back to trade. But . . .

DT: So you were tracked whether you wanted to or not, right?

JS: Yes, yes.

DT: (Chuckles) Strange tracking, but. . . .

JS: So one day they had a problem in the Hilo High School office. They had a duplicator machine, that they needed to duplicate things, but somehow it was broken. So then I had a relative that works in the office, so she calls me up, says, "Eh, can you take a look at it, because the maintenance man had a contract, he's gonna come from Honolulu. So we need it right away."

So I said, "Well, I'll try."

Went down to take a look at it, sure enough, you know, few adjustments and things went okay. So at that time, Mrs. Putnam was the office manager, and I says, "Oh, I want to be transferred to machine shop," this and that. Bang, next day I was shifted to the right course that I chose. So that's the reason why I became a mechanic, a welder, a machinist.

DT: And you enjoyed doing that, I guess.

JS: That's right, that's right.

DT: Well, we'll continue along after we've changed tapes, Jack.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: This is tape number two with Mr. Jack Suwa. I guess we can continue. You graduated from Hilo High School in 1942, and you went on to Hilo Vocational School.

JS: That is right.

MK: And at Hilo Vocational School, what did you specialize in?

JS: Specialize---at that time, the school was embarking, building, so I was assigned to drafting the building, for the building. So I spent quite a bit of time drafting the building, in other words, with close supervision from the principal, who was at that time, Mr. (Eugene Jordan), undertook that building, the carpentry and all of those welders within the school were trying to build the school in Reed's Bay, which was later destroyed by tidal wave. So at that time, before I got out, I was doing that, and somehow I had to give up and start working. So at that time, when I applied for the job, it was first recommended, because of my work with the vocational school, Mrs. [Emma] Giacometti the superintendent of education [supervising principal, department of public instruction], recommended that I go to Puna Sugar [Company], (where) Mr. [Guido] Giacometti was the mill superintendent. I reported to the plantation, [but] at that time, they were in need of mechanics, rather than the factory, so I ended up in the garage, as a mechanic. Then I worked my way up and became a supervisor, and later on, the garage superintendent.

DT: Yeah, but the World War II came along in there someplace. Did you---you didn't serve during the war itself? I guess you were exempt from service, were you not?

JS: Yes.

DT: Or . . .

JS: My two brothers, one in the 100[th Infantry Battalion], and one in 442[nd Regimental Combat Team], and I was exempt as being essential agricultural worker at that time. So but later on, as my brothers came out, were discharged, I volunteered.

DT: Oh, you volunteered . . .

JS: Yes, 1946.

DT: You probably volunteered before the war was over, but you didn't get accepted until later, is that right?

JS: Nineteen forty-six, I volunteered, and discharged in somewhat later part of 1948. Then, went back, as the discharged, joined the Hawai'i National Guard, and then went to OCS [Officer Candidate School], Fort Knox, Kentucky, and became a, later on, became a company commander for the 299th Tank Company.

DT: That's right, you went to Officer Candidate School.

JS: Right.

DT: You didn't go to the war college though . . .

JS: No, no.

DT: . . . I thought maybe that you had.

MK: I was wondering, what motivated you to volunteer for the army?

JS: Well, I thought of trying to make use of all the army educational [opportunities], especially being in the field of mechanic, and of getting into ordnance. So, sure enough, I ended up in going to practically all of those military schools that had to do with mechanics and ordnance school. So that's the way, when I came out—discharged—I went back again to the plantation, that sets my career for being a supervisor.

DT: So that was really valuable to you then . . .

JS: That's right, that's right.

DT: . . . your military training.

JS: That's right.

DT: So after the war, you went right back to Puna Sugar.

JS: That's right.

DT: And you got to be a supervisor, I guess, pretty shortly thereafter.

JS: Right.

MK: And then, is it Puna then, that your political career really took off?

JS: That's right. As I said, on that reapportionment, they needed someone, Democrats needed someone to make sure they gain the seat. And at first, I said no, but later on, (agreed to try it).

DT: Who recruited you? Who got you---who personally got you involved? Was it Stanley Hara [state house finance chairman, 1959-64], somebody like that, that had gotten elected in '54?

JS: Well, it's not the Democrat party per se, but the community leaders (like Mr. Tomiji Togashi) thought that I should be representing that district. [They wanted someone] who has at least worked with the community. And naturally, I have talked to Stanley Hara, and also Mr. Serizawa [territorial house, 1953-56; state house, 1959-70], you know, and got into politics.

DT: Did Jack [John] Burns [delegate to Congress, 1956-59; governor, 1962-74] come around and see you too, or . . .

JS: Well . . .

DT: . . . did you meet him later?

JS: He was at my fundraiser, when I first announced that I'm running.

DT: [Nineteen] fifty-eight.

JS: Yes. He specially made a trip out there.

DT: And when he was in, let's see, he was in Congress at that time, wasn't he?

JS: Yeah . . .

DT: He was a delegate.

JS: Delegate, that's right, I guess.

DT: So you must have been rather pleased to have a delegate come out at your fundraiser.

JS: Oh yes. At the same time, you know, it was an honor to have him and . . .

MK: When people came up to you, members of the community encouraging you to run, what inside of you, you know, got you to say, yeah, I'll do it?

JS: Well, I was—here again it goes back to my—Mr. Suwa—my dad, trying to help others and, you know, thought of, well, maybe it's the time for me to not only being a scoutmaster or whatever it is, but maybe ought to get into politics and help the community at large, not only a small segment of the community, but maybe Puna district as a whole.

DT: Well you must have made a lot of friends in your own quiet way, right, in the plantation?

JS: Oh, that is right.

DT: Working with people. You're not exactly—as I remember—back in those days, you weren't exactly the *ho'omalimali*, glad-handing type of person.

JS: No, I was quite serious and in fact. Later on, I found out that while I was the [state house] finance chairman [1971–79], [people] would always come in and say they had hard time coming in, but when they go out, they said they feel so comfortable and, "Hey, the guy not too bad at all," you know, going out, (according to my staff).

(Laughter)

DT: Well, let's see, the person that paved the way, I guess he must have been finance chairman until you became finance chairman, Stanley Hara?

JS: Stanley Hara (and James Wakatsuki).

DT: Or was there somebody in between?

JS: In between. Now, supreme court Justice [James] Wakatsuki [house finance chairman, 1969–70; speaker of the state house of representatives, 1975–80] was there.

DT: He was in between the two of you, okay.

JS: That's right, that's right.

DT: Well he was the---he would throw fear of all sorts of things into people's hearts. No wonder, they figured you might be like Wakatsuki. (Laughs) Isn't that right?

JS: Well, he had a nickname, being "Stone."

DT: Or . . .

JS: Well, I worked very well with---prior to Wakatsuki becoming speaker [of the state house], he was a finance chairman, and later on, I became his vice [chair]. And one day, he says, "Hey Jack, you always helping me out, but you don't ask for things."

I said, "You know, you're asking me what I want?" I said, "I hope you make it come true." And that's the one [issue] that Wakatsuki was always resisting, Hilo being the four-year college. You know, university, he was resisting. It says that---he used to tell me that it's best for the country children to come out and face the reality in big city and challenging, you know. I said, "I buy that, but all of them cannot afford to send their children out." So I said, "That's the only thing I ask you."

And sure enough, he gave me. Next year, he gave me the third year, and following that, fourth year. Prior to that, they were trying hard, was always rejected, didn't come out from the committee.

DT: Yeah, there were substantial arguments on both sides, as I recall . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: . . . We're probably getting a little ahead of the story . . .

JS: Yeah.

DT: . . . because you didn't become instantly---some people might think you became finance chairman the minute you stepped foot in the legislature.

JS: No.

DT: I don't think that quite happened, right?

JS: No, I had to work my way up. I had to . . .

MK: Shall we move back then?

DT: I think we better move back a little bit to . . .

MK: To retrace before we get too far out?

DT: . . . the campaign of '58. Did you do anything unusual in your campaign? You obviously won. Was it almost a foregone conclusion you would win, or didn't you do a lot of campaigning and . . .

JS: I had to do quite bit of campaigning, house to house, and talking to the community leaders. More so it was very difficult for me, because the older isseis, the Japanese people, were obligated to the plantation managers. And here, me, young boy coming up—so their family had to split [their vote], you know. Either the husband or the wife vote for me, so they had to split their vote. So they all had some obligation to the plantation . . .

DT: That was a multimember district, wasn't it?

JS: No, single member.

DT: Single member.

JS: Yes, yes.

DT: You were a single member . . .

JS: That's right, small district.

DT: . . . although there were a lot of multimember.

JS: Hilo . . .

DT: So who was your opponent, do you remember?

JS: Assistant manager [of AD Castro & Co., Ltd.] at that time, Mr. Gilbert Hay. So more so, they had an obligation, so I had the younger group. The older group of Japanese primarily didn't vote for me. But other---I had the other nationalities supporting me, so that's the reason why I won. It helped.

MK: How did you get the other nationalities to support you?

JS: Oh, being a community leader and when I served as a scout, going around and helping the children, and I gained respect.

DT: And your opponent being a manager wasn't exactly endearing himself to the other ethnic groups that may be in the plantation or in the communities either.

JS: And at that time, also, it was unionized and labor supported me.

DT: You had the ILWU [International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union] support.

JS: Yeah, right, yes. Yes.

DT: So, a whole new world opened up for you in '59.

JS: That is right. That is right.

DT: Did you just get into---you just got into the legislature, and here you hadn't exactly been pushing to get in there. I gather, in other words, you were more or less drafted. All of a sudden, you're getting [into] the legislature and the Democratic party virtually fell apart at the seams, didn't they? (Chuckles)

JS: And getting there [to the legislature] and also the first year, got into a problem of a reorganization. And here, although I had the support of the labor, no one came to talk to me. And only one I was in communication at the time, trying to learn what goes on here, was with Stanley Hara, Toshi [Toshio] Serizawa. So I ended up supporting Vince [Vincent] Esposito [territorial house, 1951-59; state senate, 1959-66]. And we lost because of the coalition, or whatever it is. So I was (assigned with chairman), police and military affairs (committee).

(Laughter)

DT: What do you think went wrong? Now, you were brand new, class of '58, '59, as I call 'em. What's your version, really, of that? Did Esposito get a little bit too heady? Was he a little bit overconfident, and maybe a little bit cocky—as some people would say—he and Tom [Thomas] Gill [territorial house, 1959; state house 1959-62; U.S. Congress, 1962; lieutenant governor 1966-70]?

JS: Well, I wouldn't blame too much on Vince Esposito, but Tom was certainly (no help), didn't compromise. So every time they have a meeting—understand, I was freshman, so I'm not privileged to get into the nitty-gritty discussion—but every time they get closer, then Tom will make some remarks, and bang, it's broken up. So that went on for a number of days and the coalition took place.

MK: What was your view of that coalition? I mean, you're a Democrat and now Democrats and Republicans are together?

JS: Well, at that time, freshman, and also later on, you know, the dean of politics, Doc Hill, told me at one of the Hawai'i caucuses, he'd say, "You only speak when you're spoken to."

I recall that, and that's the way it was at that time. So not much said as a freshman. But when I started out, we had a community meeting, and we made a ten years' program—how we're gonna be tackling community improvements. I can recall now that what we set up was on track. First thing was for education, and what we lack is the facilities, updating the school facilities. And one of the things that I feel happy about is the first community school library [that] was built in Ka'ū, was my district, and then came Pāhoa High School. The community, you know, took that high school first. Then came Kea'au, also had the community and school library. And it went as far to Mountain View community school library, that concept was placed and put. And of course, the road. We wanted to make Puna a triangular road so that the tourists can stay over one extra night, having to take the national park and all of the road to Kalapana black sand beach, so we had to improve the roads, so we worked on that. So one of the nice highways was still in Puna.

DT: You know, Elmer Cravalho [chairman of the house finance committee, 1957-59; speaker of

the state house, 1959–68], I guess proved to be a happy choice for you, because first of all, he's a former schoolteacher, he was interested in education.

JS: That's right.

DT: Number two, he was a neighbor islander, as opposed to Esposito, being an Oahuan.

JS: After the war, we mentioned, you know, I sat very well with the rest of the chairmen. This is Elmer Cravalho. In fact, one of the things that I can be happy about is that there was—at that time, children were responsible for their parents. You know, because of that language, in the welfare areas, or whatever it is, the hospital costs, yeah, they had to pay. The family had to pay. And for that reason, they were having hard time. But there was a federal regulation that said children are not responsible for the parents. So, in other words, I had to talk to Elmer Cravalho too, so that we can push for that, which, you know, Portuguese culture also has respect for the parents. And Elmer said, "No, you can't do that," this and that.

But I explained to him that, say, look, all our first-generation parents want to give the best education for our children, everything for the children. Now that they are successful, or at least not in poverty, all of a sudden, they're sick, okay, they're sick. And the cost, the medical cost, and they have, the children have their own family. And they drag 'em down back to poverty. I don't think that was the idea of the people, parents. So I said, "Eh, you know, Oriental, very much hesitant of getting welfare. It's not for their welfare daily living, but for hospital costs. And as the hospital cost rose, that was a necessity. And I can see some of the community where really was getting bad. The families, you know, the children, getting mad at the grandparents, this and that, because they're bedridden. So pass the law."

DT: So the state should have some responsibility for this.

JS: Yes. So in other words, just to take out that the children is not responsible for the parents. But that language, similar to the federal, Hawai'i didn't have that. But, you know what? I really get blasted from the Japanese newspaper editorial for being, Japanese call *oyafukō*, you know. It said, no concern . . .

DT: They felt the children should be responsible all the way around . . .

JS: That is right.

DT: . . . into the ground.

JS: Right.

DT: Well, you were pretty much following the [U.S. President] Franklin Roosevelt, [U.S. President] Harry Truman thing of, I guess, which involved . . .

JS: Right.

DT: . . . some people call the welfare state, at any rate.

JS: But primarily, I wasn't pushing for those who were lazy and not doing their proper, job and

either had. . . . It's just that being old age, and getting sick, this and that, hospital costs was rising to the extent, you know. So at that time, wasn't too bad, but look at today, the costs. Children cannot pay for their parents' hospital costs. At that time, earlier, they weren't covered, but today Medicare, Medicaid, you know, will assist, so it's not that critical, but still very important. So I feel, although I was blasted by the Japanese editorial, now I feel happy (about it).

DT: Little bit better about it.

JS: Yes, I feel better about it.

DT: Those same editorials would probably agree with you today. (Chuckles)

JS: That's right.

DT: You became chairman of the county committee down in the Big Island, did you? Was that before or after you became a member of the legislature?

JS: Well, I became chairman of the county, precinct [Kurtistown precinct president].

DT: Oh, just the precinct . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: . . . not the county committee?

JS: Not the county committee, the precinct.

DT: Oh, you were a member of the county committee.

JS: Yes, yes.

DT: Probably because you were a precinct member.

JS: Right, yes. And came the district chairman [First District, Puna].

DT: Oh, district chairman.

JS: Right, right, district chairman.

DT: Which would make you a member of the county committee.

JS: Right, that's right.

MK: You know, you got into the legislature during its, during the territory's last year, yeah?

JS: That's right, (thirtieth territorial) legislature.

MK: Last territorial legislature.

JS: That's right.

MK: And later on you were part of the first . . .

JS: First statehood.

MK: . . . statehood legislature. When statehood came along, what hopes did you see? What did you think Hawai'i could then achieve with statehood?

JS: Well, with statehood, we could, I could foresee some of the things that we were lacking in funds that I'm sure federal aids, federal funds could help the education and economic development, and trade. So I saw it was better on the statehood.

MK: And like you said, you had a ten-year program and . . .

JS: That is right.

MK: . . . kind of working on it . . .

JS: Right.

MK: . . . as the years went by.

JS: That's right. So if you, today, look at that time, the highway from Hilo to Volcano was bad, one of the accident-prone highway. The shoulders were narrow. So we accomplished that. In fact, if you see, the only highway that's devoted for one way from Hilo to Kea'au, strictly a four-lane highway.

DT: Yeah, that took quite a bit of doing too, because under territorial status, the neighbor islands had the majority in each legislature—in each house. Under statehood, after statehood and after actually reapportionment in '58 . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: . . . neighbor islanders were in the minority. So . . .

JS: Right.

DT: . . . once again, I guess it was fortuitous that you had somebody like Elmer Cravalho, a neighbor islander, who was speaker, because you were able to get a lot of things for the neighbor islands. Though you didn't—you were only a minority, right?

JS: That's right. As far as---although Democrats in the majority, the senate was under—Republicans had the control in the senate.

DT: At the outset after statehood.

JS: Yeah, that's right. So, but always the, you know, provided information for my district, wants and the needs, and kept on plugging. And whatever loose change that I can get from the

legislature, you know, got into it. Started out with pork barrel, and then add it on. Water development, because of vast land areas, where water was needed, so we established a water system. Still today, we don't have enough water system.

DT: When did you become finance chairman?

JS: Became finance chairman in, let's see, (1971-1979). I served (nine) years at the finance and got out, so it would be ('79). (I resigned one year earlier as chair of finance. Mr. [Ted] Morioka, vice chair, took over as chair.)

JS: (I resigned. I was elected by members for ten years, but nine years served.) The last term, I resigned.

DT: But before that, you served in the Con-con [Constitutional convention], I believe, too.

JS: That is right, yes, Con-con.

DT: And that's the Con-con when you finally got an elected school board provided for, right?

JS: That is right, school board.

DT: [Tape inaudible.]

JS: Yeah, that's right.

DT: That was done by amendment, wasn't it? Yeah, it was done by an amendment earlier but you made a lot of changes in '68.

JS: That's right.

DT: I guess we'll take up the Con-con after we've switched tapes.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-103-1-91; SIDE ONE

JC: This is a continuation of the Jack Suwa interview. This is videotape number three.

MK: This is tape number three with Mr. Jack Suwa, and Dan you want to pick it up?

DT: I think we reached a point where I interjected that really early in his legislative career he also became a delegate to the Con-con in '68. I think we mentioned the school board in passing. I think that came in a few years earlier by a direct vote of the people, but it was still a topic of some conversations as to whether it should be kept. And I believe you were one who favored giving it time to go and develop as an elected body. But it was also known as public service collective bargaining . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: Are there other things, or maybe you want to talk about the collective bargaining item, or other things out of the Con-con.

JS: Well, one of the things that I'd like to get into is how Hebden Porteus [territorial house, 1940-58; state senate 1958-70] became the president [1968] of the Con-con.

DT: Oh, that would be interesting.

JS: All right. Speaker [of the state house] Tadao [Beppu], at that time was representative Beppu, wanted to be the Con-con president also. And naturally the labor preference was that of Hebden Porteus. So I advised Tadao at that time that if I have his permission, that I could talk to Mr. [Edward] DeMello at that time, who represented ILWU [as a lobbyist], that we will support Porteus, in turn, they will support Tadao Beppu become a speaker the following session. And that's the way it ended up to be, that we supported Porteus, and Beppu became a secretary. And the following year, Tadao became the speaker of the house.

DT: As a matter of record, he did, but wasn't that a strange position for the union to take, to support Porteus?

JS: I think they had, in the past, had dealt with Mr. Porteus and they thought that he could be a fair—bring in the Republican and naturally labor having the Democratic support, that they could at least come out at the convention very well for the labor.

DT: So they weren't always that faithful to the Democratic party, were they, the ILWU?

JS: Well, the ILWU, per se, is not Democrat. Primarily they supported Democratic members, because more of the Democratic leaned toward labor.

DT: Could it have been that the ILWU preferred to have Porteus in the chair, rather than out in the audience, shall we say, talking? (Chuckles)

JS: Well, I'll pass the judgment, but he ended up being a fair president for the Con-con.

DT: Anything else about the Con-con that you . . .

JS: Well, that Con-con primarily had to do with preservation of agriculture, but at that later convention, they passed that, to preserve important agriculture land. But still today, one of the things that has not met up with the obligation of the Con-con is the designation of prime agriculture land. So I hope that someday they'll come to reality, whether the large land-owners, or whatever it is who is somewhat against it, they'll see the light that it's just as equally important to preserve prime agriculture land. And once you preserve, or designate important ag[riculture] land, then you can set up the tax structure accordingly. If you are forced to designate your land, the important ag land, then must have some tax break, tax incentive, for preserving the land for agriculture use (and important point is priority use of water under the state constitution).

DT: Along with that, I guess you would probably still be a Democrat that you were, you would probably be in the forefront today of trying to get affordable house lots for people too. It's not being in contradiction to this prime agriculture land, right?

JS: That is right. And see, primarily, if they were to designate prime agriculture land, the rest of so-called agriculture land today, which is classified agriculture land, could be released for housing. So naturally, housing is getting to the important ag land, because it's primarily easier to develop, because it's flat land. And more so, the developers will make a proportionally bigger profit. So I think if the state, or the counties, matter of fact, could look into other than the important ag land, there's plenty of housing land that could be made available.

DT: So you wouldn't exactly be out there beating the drums for the developers today. You would be willing to checkrein the developer today.

JS: That is right. That is right.

MK: I notice that you became finance chairman—well, you were finance chairman for [nine] years, and in looking at the newspaper clippings, there wasn't that much. You know, it seemed that you had a much lower profile than, say, a Tony Kunimura [house finance chairman, 1981-82; Kaua'i mayor, 1982-88] that followed later on. And I was wondering, how you became finance chairman and how you would characterize your style of being finance chairman?

JS: Well, I think my style has been to study the membership, know their strengths, know their wants and needs, and to help them. And naturally if you do that, naturally you'll be the type of leadership that you'll have sufficient votes to pursue what the Democratic party wants to do, at least guided by their platform, you certainly can pursue. But I think today, I think they have a Democratic convention, but the platform—but I can't see the direction, you know, of putting priority into certain platform, wherever it is.

DT: You had to become a little bit more careful about how you spent money, for example, during the late sixties and the early seventies. The Democrats were throwing everything they could into such things as education. You had to begin, as I recall, to trim back a little bit too, 'cause money was getting a little bit harder to come by.

JS: That is right. As far as prioritizing—(that) became very important. (It was important) to make sure that money was well spent and (that we) looked (at) all the avenues of wherever waste is, that we correct those areas and strengthen with new appropriation. I think what at that time bothered me was that innovative ideas became—and then we appropriate the money—the innovative ideas were to replace certain ongoing programs, but that [the ongoing programs] were kept, you know. It was compounding the cost. So we were very frugal (to) make sure the dollar was spent in the right direction.

DT: Weren't you rather frustrated? I think you and your colleagues—not just you personally, but your colleagues—became increasingly frustrated at getting your ideals converted into actuality. In other words, a weakness, perhaps, on the part of Hawai'i was getting things done, getting things accomplished, the administration. Put it that way.

JS: Well, in terms of administration versus legislature, at times trying to get the priority in line,

we had some arguments, but beside that, I know things did, you know, go further, as far as accomplishment in the area of education, bids and bond, and capital improvements, and putting the money wisely, floating the bonds at the proper time, and specialized bonding for our hospital, and all of those became [approved] that year.

DT: You earlier served under [George] Ariyoshi [governor, 1974–86], I think, in the administration. But part of the time you were in the legislature under Ariyoshi, right?

JS: That's right.

DT: Some people refer to Ariyoshi as being more of a caretaker governor. Would you share that view, or do you think he was a . . .

JS: No, I think he was worried as far as---our revenue versus expenditure was getting out of line and he was very conservative in those areas. He made sure that unnecessary spending was not done and I think he held back quite a bit of appropriation which was restricted. And sure enough, later on, tremendous surplus created, but I think it was a blessing for the next governor.

(Laughter)

DT: That's an interesting way to put it. (Chuckles)

JS: Yeah.

DT: In other words, all the years you spent in the legislature, and then later, I guess, with Ariyoshi trying to be conscious of savings, that simply sets the stage for the [John] Waihee [governor, since 1986] administration too.

JS: Right. The last part of the Ariyoshi fourth-year term, the department of agriculture undertook a very difficult political---this is eradicating the Moloka'i cattle, which was (infected) with tuberculosis, which was for forty years or so. It was known and nothing had been done. I pointed out to the governor and our staff, the constitutional convention limits the governor's term for eight years and in the last term, one should forget about election. Make sure that the governor, or the administration, do the right thing for the future of the state of Hawai'i. Because of that, we undertook the Moloka'i eradication of the cattle, which was very unpopular. You know, in fact, I got the Onion Award from so-called *Hawai'i Business* magazine, or something. At the same time, the same month, I got the Onion Award and the Castle & Cooke [Ltd.] president also got the Onion Award, for other purpose. I think [the eradication of TB-infected Moloka'i cattle] that's one of the credits to the Ariyoshi administration, that if you considered politics only, then [we] could not achieve.

DT: So you would not be as critical as some about Ariyoshi's austerity and particularly some of his programs in his last term?

JS: Well, being the chairman, naturally appropriated money, we had to be restricted. But you know, government must, believe me, government must go in cycle. Have the time to appropriate money, spend, and have to cut back. And I think Governor Ariyoshi's cycle is to cut back.

DT: Now perhaps we should establish, because we're getting into some ground rules, you served in the legislature until, what year was it now?

JS: Legislature until ('80). I did not run in '82. I was . . .

DT: Shortly thereafter you became the chairman of the board of ag and forestry?

JS: First I was . . .

DT: I'm not sure of the name of it. (Chuckles)

JS: First sent to [be] deputy [director] to the [state department of] transportation under—deputy to that of Dr. [Ryokichi] Higashionna, who was the director of transportation. My primary mission was be the fiscal officer and also to assist the governor. At that time, the road fund was in jeopardy, so without getting new—imposing new—taxes, we transferred some money from that of the general fund, which was also to do with the sale of gasoline and also that was transferred. So governor, the next campaign, was able to say that he had not raised taxes.

DT: You didn't have anything like this new recent five cents a gallon gasoline tax to reap, I guess. (Chuckles)

JS: Yes. (Chuckles)

DT: Although you stayed with transportation for, how many, four years, was it, or . . .

JS: Two years.

DT: Two years.

JS: Then there was a vacancy in the deputy position at the department of agriculture, because now present chairman, Yukio Kitagawa, was transferred to, chose to go to University of Hawai'i, so there was a vacancy. And meantime, he asked that I be coming to department of ag, so that I can be closer to the farmers, for the governor. About a month later, then director [chairman of board of state of Hawai'i department of agriculture], John Farias, chose to resign and go into different endeavors, so the governor asked me, rather than to be here as a deputy, how about being chairman. And in selecting a deputy, he says, "I think it's about time that we have some women in our cabinet and in the field of agriculture." So we decided to choose Susan, Susie [Suzanne] Peterson as my [deputy] director.

DT: So that's how. So you had to worry about finances again. You worried about finances in the transportation department, then as director or chairman. You had to worry about agriculture budget. So you got to see it then, really, in a fiscal sense, from both sides of the two department perspectives.

JS: That is right. So if I was young and had the opportunity to serve in the legislature again, then I would have been a better legislator, knowing the administration, knowing two sides. You know, I would have made a better legislator, but . . .

DT: You mean, better know when to get tough, and when not to, probably. (Chuckles)

JS: That is right. That's right. That's right.

DT: Oh, how wonderful hindsight is. Right? (Chuckles)

JS: That's right. I reminisce.

MK: Let's see, you got into administration then, right. There's a switch from politics.

JS: That's right.

MK: What did you find best about the switch from politics to administration, or worst about this switch?

JS: Well, here again, once being the finance chairman and getting on the side of the administration, I have to start begging, you know. Had a different feel. But you got to know the department and the strength [and] the weakness. It was a good experience.

MK: Also with your twenty years in the legislature, I'm assuming you could call upon your old ties with other legislators to help your department.

JS: Yes, but my style was not—have to go on merits. That's the way I operated for my twenty years in the legislature. So basically, if one is to look at my staff, I had no patronage. Only patronage that I had was part-time student from university, trying to help their tuition. Also, you know, to expose them [the students] to politics, whatever it is. Plus I look for professional, because where I lack in education, where I lack in experience in certain area, I wanted to strengthen with staff that was capable. So I was surrounded, fortunately, I was surrounded in the legislature with qualified staff. When it came to department, I chose staff that can really be honest with me and work together, and that's the way we accomplished. Still today, I think I had many friends in the department of transportation, in the staff level, to the lowest echelon, to the janitor, and likewise here.

DT: Of course, I was about to quit, Michiko. [Tape inaudible] representative [tape inaudible], you're not---the big shift came. Instead of people going to his [a legislator's] fundraisers, he had to go and contribute to their fundraisers, (chuckles) as a part of administration.

JS: That's right, yeah.

DT: Is that essentially correct?

JS: That's right. Instead of each one having to have a fundraiser, we [neighbor island legislators] combined our resources and made neighbor island fundraiser, and naturally those who were able to have contribution to donate, naturally goes with the title of finance chairman, you have more people donating, so we shared equally. That's one reason, again, when you want to be a finance chairman, you had the support. Year after year.

DT: If you're in administration, you have to be sure to show up at the governor's fundraiser.

(Laughter)

JS: Oh definitely, definitely. Definitely.

MK: You know, when I was looking at some newspaper articles about the time you left the legislature, and you made some comments about how politics had changed and how you felt society was fragmented, and how people didn't have a vision or a program, and also that you didn't want to impose your old values on these new politicians. Maybe you can comment about these changes in politics that you noticed.

JS: Well, one of the things that I had some *kānalua* my last year of finance chairman, was the appropriation for creating OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs]. I believed that (not much thinking and discussion took place to) improve the Hawaiian Homes Commission and get all the Hawaiians united in one cause, rather than establishing another one. But I was personally opposed (to the) 20 percent. (How was the percent arrived at, from what base?) Whatever it is, I yielded to the fact that the Con-con approved [it]. So I felt that one chairman's (thinking) cannot (stop) the wishes of the Con-con (when it) has (been) approved. And at that time, if I remained as a finance chairman and opposed that, then the speaker at that time was Henry Peters, right? He could not satisfy his constituents and (being) Hawaiian also. So it's one of the areas that personally I thought that it should be one [office], instead of creating another, and then getting fragmented.

DT: You still feel that way today. You have questions about sort of creating a government inside of a government, as OHA is.

JS: That's right. That's right. I believe that if they remained part of that government, I think with the understanding of the legislature, they could have better assistance in that same. . . . So . . .

DT: I'm not going to argue that one with you. That's for certain. I'm not injecting myself into this, but I think everybody appreciates, and I think you've spelt it out for people in the future, that you were really caught in the middle on that one.

JS: That's right.

DT: Well, do you have any other questions? I've got a sixty-four dollar question, which is not a very nice question, but it's been raised by others. I'm not raising it new here. The senate accused you and others in the class of '58, '59 in the legislature and so forth, of jumping into administrative jobs just to get your [highest paying] three years [to count towards] retirement. That's an awful [tape inaudible]. I know you've heard that many times before. What's your response to that?

JS: My response to that is when I had a meeting with the governor, the governor was very cautious about appointing elected official. If they are out there to just to spend their time to get the highest three [years], then he's not in favor. But we had something to contribute, and he had no objections. So for that reason, I'm sure he's satisfied with my performance at the transportation [department], and also department of agriculture. So it's all depending on the individual.

DT: There's also another reason, isn't there? For example, how much were you paid when you first started out in the legislature?

JS: Oh, \$1,000 a month. I mean, \$1,000 per session, and came to [\$]1,500. And at that time, although campaign costs were very minimum. I think my first election, I think I spent about \$3,000, and got elected.

DT: In other words, you didn't have much of a salary base upon which to build any retirement at all, did you?

JS: No.

DT: Okay, and I think that's a point too.

JS: Yes. One of the fulfilling experience that I---all of the opportunity I have when the leadership asked me to speak to the freshmen, is that all the legislators are very sensitive about trips. Press call it junket, but I told them, "Travel, when you have the opportunity, for a good cause."

In other words, whether you contributing, or whether you're looking to experience in others, [travel] because you cannot be in the state alone and think we know it all. We have to travel to look what the others are doing.

DT: And Hawai'i is isolated, too.

JS: That is right. And sure, social legislation, I think we can contribute to some of the other states, but in other areas. . . . One of the things that still hits me today most is that, when I went to Japan, rode the subway, and came out, stopped at the big department store, Mitsukoshi. And the first thing on my mind said, oh, what this guy paid the legislature, or the Diet, to achieve that? In Hawai'i, we say there's payoff. We (must) design wherever the people wants to travel, the center where the most people will use that.

DT: I think traveling is broadening even for legislators or whoever it is. I think we're gonna have to change tapes. We should give you an opportunity to sort of sum things up.

JS: Right.

DT: And we'll do that in a few minutes.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: This is a continuation of the Jack Suwa interview. This is videotape number four.

MK: Tape number four with Mr. Jack Suwa, and I believe this will be our last tape. We're going to have some reflective questions, I guess, to wrap up.

DT: All right, when you look back upon, really, the development of modern government, really, here in Hawai'i, how do you feel about it? Back in the [19]50s, when you came in—in the

late [19]50s—but by this time the Democrats reflected upon their own platform. Do you think you accomplished a lot? Are you satisfied with what you and the other young Democrats were able to do, or you second-guessed yourself? What thoughts do you have on that?

JS: Well, looking back and looking at the prewar, and that after the war, and after the statehood, I think Hawai'i came a long way, I think, for the better. It was very gradual, but in certain area, leaps and bounds. In certain area, took a fast, unpredictable gain, causing some problems today in tourism. I think there is a facility [problem]. I notice that the governor and the legislature appropriate money, \$6 million or so for tourism promotion, and went to Japan and made sure that they come back. But when you look, really look at it, Hawai'i, except for the weather and the beaches, got nothing to offer for the vast tourist tour, in other words, (those) who come in groups. Hawai'i is a wonderful place for individual family travel. They have lots of places to see. You know, you can come back year after year, spend your vacation. But as a tour group, Hawai'i has never been prepared. Limited, one of the popular places—limitation to Punchbowl. So is the Pearl Harbor cruise. So is the famous beach, Hanauma Bay. Never designed for groups, and here we want to spend \$6 million [for tourism promotion]. That's good, that's good investment. But, I think, they're getting the priority mixed up. You're telling the tourists to come to Hawai'i, but they don't have [the facilities]. So that's the reason that tourism gonna be stale from now. In other words, the growth, if it's 4 million it's gonna stay 4 million. That's about all, unless they provide the facilities. For instance, like Punchbowl, if you get certain amount of buses out there, you have to turn around. You cannot get in. Two buses park. If you're third, you're told to go back. That's something wrong. (Look at famous Pali Lookout, not even rest room facilities.)

DT: Is this a part of the bigger picture, maybe you're saying—and some people are saying it—that some of our Democrats today are behaving just like the Republicans did years ago? For example, they're now so devoted to tourism, just like the Republicans of yesteryear were devoted to wanting to hang on to the plantation in sugar and pine[apple]. In other words, do the Democrats have something still to learn from the Republicans of things, maybe, not to do?

JS: When I started out in politics, I only knew the coin had one face. But later on, as I became involved in politics and got experience, there were two sides to a coin, you know. So in other words, I started out extreme liberal. I'm liberal today too, but a happy-medium liberal, let's say. I think we have to adjust and the Democrats certainly have to look, you know. We have to look at our social problem at the same time, look at economic development. But we have a problem lying ahead, it's not rosy.

DT: Some rich Democrats may have had a short memory, just like some rich Republicans had years ago. Is that true?

JS: Well, today if you look at stocks and bond, and if you take an inventory how many of those citizens own stocks and bonds, it's not like twenty, thirty years ago, or forty years ago. Today, if you look at whether the Democrats or the Republicans [own stocks and bonds], I think they're all same.

DT: In other words, they are human beings . . .

JS: That's right.

DT: . . . right out of the same mold.

JS: That's right. Those who are extreme are corporate level and making millions of dollars, you can classify as a Republican. But today, I think, most of the Democrats, most of the Republicans are middle income. The politician can take care (the middle income group then it will gradually help) the poor, you know, then it will be okay.

DT: One sort of question—you probably have a couple more, Michiko—could it be said that, maybe, in the process of making progress in Hawai'i—and I agree with you that we've made a lot. It's not perfect yet, but we've made a lot, politically or economically, but there's a possibility of maybe we have treated the younger generation a little bit too gently or, put another way, spoiled the younger generation?

JS: I myself, you know, spoil our children. In our days, we have to work for it. From while you were going school, summer time and all that. But today, I think we seem to provide some of the luxury on a silver platter. But I'm not saying in general everyone is doing that, but I think there is room to be more value conscious. We have to teach our children values. Of course, when you talk about old times, our children would say that's old stuff. But within the old stuff, there's lot of good things—ethnic culture for every nation, you know. And I think in order to live in peace, I think we have to go back to the values.

DT: And understand and respect one another above all else.

JS: That's right. That's right.

DT: That's not a bad note to end on. But Michiko, I'm sure you have quite a few other questions, perhaps.

MK: I think that we'll—I guess maybe one more question. I guess, maybe for the record, it would be nice to know what you're involved in now.

JS: Yes. Fortunately, having the experience in the legislature, and having the experience in administration, and still learning, now I'm retired, semi-retired, and presently Mr. Wallace Amioka and I formed a partnership, called Public Affairs Consultants Hawai'i. Presently we represent the Western Petroleum Association, which represents oil companies—Chevron, Union, Texaco, Shell, and also Aloha Petroleum. So we represent most of the oil companies, except for PRI. PRI, they have their own lobbyists. So with the experience, my job is not primarily in behalf of the oil company. But my job is to inform our clientele that the law is the law, but within the law there's human aspect, compromise, that for better. You know, for instance, environmental subjects. By law, I think they can go to court and they can do this, and they can withstand. But I think to create the future, communication with the citizens of state of Hawai'i it is very important, that we advise our clientele in that direction [of the human aspect, compromise].

DT: All of which gives you another perspective on politics, doesn't it, from a different point of view? Legislative, administrative, lobbying, and who knows what lies ahead. We thank you very much for joining us . . .

JS: Thank you.

DT: . . . and giving us the time.

MK: Thank you, Mr. Suwa.

END OF INTERVIEW

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