

# Congressman Discusses Wide Range of Subjects During Brief 'Office Hours'

By GEORGE H. BELL  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

When a U.S. Congressman returns to his home district to hold "office hours," he never knows what problems will walk in his door.

But he must be open and ready to hear his constituents on any subject they want to present. And he must get to the heart of the matter—since time is at a premium—as quickly as possible.

He must be friendly and tactful: everyone who comes to see him is a voter. When he is not able to offer relief or agreement, he has to be able to present his counter argument or point of view clearly and reasonably, yet with a certain toughness so that he won't appear to "weasel."

When Rep. Robert Duncan came "home" last week and set up shop in the library of his former law firm in the Franklin Building, he had ample opportunity to demonstrate his ability in this area of human relations.

For nearly two and a half hours—without a break—Duncan talked with a wide variety of Medford area residents about a kaleidoscope of problems, projects and dilemmas.

Some of the matters, of course, the congressman was "on top of" and completely familiar with, but others, naturally, he heard about for the first time when the constituent presented his case.

**Talk About Status**  
At 2 o'clock, Medford Lawyer Frank J. Van Dyke and a group of three other men came in to talk about the current status of the request for funds for Agate Dam.

Duncan told them that the Rogue Basin project was "in a better position" than some other projects in the country "because they've already spent funds on it."

But he cautioned not as absolutely certain. "You only assurance is that if it's in the President's budget, it's reasonably safe from cutting."

He said he had heard comment that having President Kennedy fly over the Rogue Basin project area a few weeks ago was a grandstand stunt and a waste of time.

"Well, it wasn't," he said, "because now when I mention it at the White House, they all know what I'm talking about."

(The House Appropriations Committee Friday approved a Bureau of Reclamation request for \$300,000 for advance planning for the Agate dam project of the Rogue River Basin.)

Duncan told the group that he was considering, at the request of the House Agriculture Committee, going to a meeting in Rome this week.

"I'm still trying to get Oregon pears into Western Europe," he said.

With a round of thanks and handshakes, the group left about 2:15 o'clock, and a secretary showed to a young military man.

For the only time during the afternoon, Duncan indicated that

the interview should be kept confidential.

The young man was in some trouble at his military base and after a series of brief, incisive questions, Duncan said he would see what he could do.

At 2:25 o'clock, a valley orchardist came in for a short chat about the Bracero bill. Duncan explained his vote on the measure, how he had wrestled with his conscience on the matter, and received assurances from the orchardist that he was "doing a wonderful job."

Three men who were interested in the South Talent Sanitary District came in next. They were concerned with what federal assistance they might be qualified to receive for a pump system and underground pipes. Duncan told them they couldn't qualify for accelerated public works funds since, in the first place, Talent was not a "distressed area," and anyway there weren't any funds left.

"Water and air pollution are

national problems," Duncan said. "Businessmen write to me and say, 'Leave it alone, it's a local problem.' What they really mean is they think they can handle the state, but they aren't so sure of the federal government."

**Would Contact Attorney**  
After about a 15 minute conversation, during which he studied a map the delegation brought and discussed the proposed boundaries of the district, Duncan promised to contact the district's attorney about procedures to follow in applying for a 30 per cent federal assistance grant.

When they left, a secretary came with a handful of pink telephone message slips. But there wasn't time to make any of the calls, and during the afternoon, the stack got bigger and bigger. He frowned about it and wondered out loud when he was going to find time to return the calls.

Next, the congressman had a short chat with a couple about their daughter's future in the Women's Army Corps. The 19-year-old girl was getting along fine, but Duncan agreed with them that she should apply for officers candidate school.

**Discusses Payoff Period**  
At 2:57 o'clock, a property owner in the Talent Irrigation District came in to discuss the payoff period on assessments. He favored doubling the period from its present 60 years to 120 years.

"Nobody's gone that far yet," Duncan told him, though he noted that in some instances the Corps of Engineers had doubled the period from 50 to 100 years. The two failed to reach agreement on the subject, but the discussion remained amiable from start to finish.

Next to come in were Medford City Manager Robert Duff and City Planning Director Ned Langford. During their nearly 30-minute interview, the city officials explained their problem with the "Biddle Road strip."

**Map Shows Strip**  
They brought along a map showing the narrow strip of

land trapped between the Interstate 5 freeway and Biddle Road.

The officials told Duncan they wanted the Bureau of Public Roads to buy the strip and give it to the city for a park site and for needed right-of-way for the eventual widening of Biddle Road.

Duff explained the city was willing to buy the land needed for the street widening, but couldn't afford to purchase the whole strip.

Duncan didn't offer them much hope, but asked them to mail the map and other data to his office in Washington, D.C., so he could look into the situation further.

**Looks Fresh, Alert**  
Throughout the entire afternoon, Duncan looked fresh and alert; if the interview tired him, it didn't show, or appear to slow him down.

He had two plain briar pipes with him, and one of them was kept lit most of the time. He was dressed in a dated gabardine suit, and wore the familiar plaid tie which has become his trademark. On the table behind him was a battered raincoat and a light-colored, wide-brimmed felt hat.

When Duff and Langford left, the secretary came in with another handful of telephone messages. He added them to the pile in front of him. "It'll take me a full day just to answer these," he observed wryly.

**Offers Company's Services**  
The manager of the Medford Western Union office, recently transferred here from elsewhere in the state, dropped in for a few minutes to extend his "good wishes" and offer the services of his company.

At 3:40 o'clock, Dick House, an old friend from the other side of the political fence, came in to discuss the Oregon Public Employees Retirement Program, which he felt was inadequate.

"These state employees spend their whole lives to achieve financial failure," House complained. He said he felt the retirement should be based on 90

to 130 per cent of the employee's highest pay during his working years.

Duncan discussed his experience with the program during his years in the state legislature (he was Speaker of the House for two consecutive sessions), and advised House to communicate "for a start" with Ken Bragg, state fiscal officer.

**Concerned About Payments**  
Another old friend, Charles Myers, a veteran of World War I, entered the office just before 4 o'clock. He was concerned with disability payments to WWI veterans, which he said were so low they were causing real hardships among many of his acquaintances.

Duncan read him a rough draft of a bill which he is currently working on for submission to the House. "I think I

can get this passed," Duncan told him, "and I think President Kennedy will sign it."

Myers seemed to like Duncan's proposed bill, and the two promised to keep in touch with each other.

At 4:07 o'clock, a Grants Pass couple came in to talk about their 22-year-old son, who has an opportunity to participate in the International Farm Youth Exchange Program early next year.

**Chance to Travel**  
The youth has a chance to travel abroad for nine months under the auspices of the program, but is facing a call from the draft board. Duncan said he was reluctant to interfere with draft boards, but he would look into it to see if anything could be done.

At 4:14 o'clock Duncan's Ore-

gon administrative assistant, Cliff Oulette, poked his head in the office to remind the congressman that he had a television appearance scheduled at 4:30 o'clock, and that other people were waiting in the outer office.

**'No More Appointments'**  
Reluctantly, at 4:17 o'clock, Duncan told the secretary "no more appointments." He grabbed his hat and coat, jammed a pile of papers into a dispatch case ("There's 14 pounds of homework in there") and dashed out of the office.

He stopped in the waiting room to talk briefly (while Oulette champed at the bit) with three men, apologizing that he wasn't able to give them more time.

He and Oulette ran down the stairs to the car with about

three minutes in which to make it to the TV station.

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## PET TALK

By M. I. L.

**CATS**  
It is no easy task to win the friendship of a cat. He is a philosopher, sedate and tranquil. A creature of habit, a lover of decency and order, he does not bestow his regard lightly and though he may consent to be your companion, he will never be your slave.

The tiny kitten can be abused at will. Few dogs will attempt to defend themselves against a brutal human being. But the cat with an uncanny instinct for recognizing a potential tormentor will if possible, avoid him. But once cornered he will fight back regardless of overwhelming odds. He can not be conquered, though he can be killed—but he will die fighting.

The cat-hater demands an adversary who will grovel before his ability to render abuse. But the cat, gentle and affectionate under loving care, will defend itself with claw and fang when tormented.

Having survived almost fanatical persecution through the centuries, the cat is not going to succumb now. His pride and royal bearing earned him portrayal, always at the feet of the Roman Goddess of Liberty, as an everlasting freedom symbol. His very presence at the hearthside bespeaks tranquility in the home. The cat has confounded his enemies to score a triumph of spirit and he remains a loving and happy captive in the lives of those who cherish him.

**Suggestions on cat feeding:**  
The secret of nutritious feeding of cats is variety. Cats are essentially carnivorous and need a lot of high-protein food of which various meats, liver, kidney, heart, fish and eggs are acceptable sources, however, they do well on diets that also include substantial amounts of carbohydrates. It is unwise to let a cat become attached to any one food exclusively. Some of the well known commercial "dog" foods containing a variety of ingredients make good rations for cats and may be fed alone or combined with table scraps. Vegetables are enjoyed by some cats but do not appear to be essential. Milk either canned or from cartons, is excellent but does not appeal to all. The amount of food required varies from cat to cat and according to its temperament and mode of life. Canned baby foods are useful in kitten feeding and in tempting a cat that is finicky or ill.

Fresh water should be available at all times even though a cat may rarely touch it. Many of the commercial cat foods lack essential nutrients and should be fed only sparingly.

At this time of year, a warm bed protected from drafts should be provided for cats as well as dogs. It is important to keep the bed clean.

## Increase in Flu Is Reported in County

A noticeable increase in influenza in Jackson County is included in the report of the Jackson County Public Health Department for the week ending Nov. 15.

The report lists the cases of communicable diseases. Influenza led the list with a total of 57. There were 22 cases reported in Medford. There were 15 in Phoenix and 10 in Ashland. Central Point had five cases, Rogue River three and Jacksonville, two.

Chicken pox cases, numbering seven, were reported from Talent. No other place reported this disease. There were two cases of measles, two of German measles, and one of infectious mononucleosis, infectious hepatitis and fifth disease in the county. Dr. A. Erin Merkel, director of the department, reported.

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