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FLEMMING

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FLEMMING, ARTHUR S.

(OH-506)

41 pages

OPEN

Director, Office of Defense Mobilization, 1953-57; Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1958-61.

DESCRIPTION: First contact with Eisenhower, Nov., 1952; invitation to serve on an advisory committee on government organization with Nelson Rockefeller and Milton Eisenhower; Flemming's close acquaintance with Milton Eisenhower; first impressions of President-elect Eisenhower; Flemming's involvement with reorganizing Federal Security Agency into Cabinet-level department; need to get Congressional authority to reorganize government (asked for by President Eisenhower and backed by Herbert C. Hoover, Sen. Robert A. Taft, and Congressman Clarence Brown of Ohio); authority granted and plan for Department of Health, Education, and Welfare completed, going into effect April, 1953; Eisenhower's direct involvement with reorganization committee; the Eisenhower brothers' relationship; Flemming's position as president of Ohio Wesleyan University and Eisenhower's interest in education and small liberal arts colleges; Eisenhower's contributions to Columbia University; Flemming's government service prior to becoming director of the Office of Defense Mobilization; Eisenhower's longtime interest in the mobilization of non-military resources; effect of acquaintance with Bernard Baruch on Eisenhower's thinking; Flemming's first ODM job--a de-control program; Gabriel "Gabe" Hauge and de-control of prices and wages; responsibilities of director of Defense Mobilization (administration of Defense Production Act, membership on Cabinet, member of National Security Council, etc.); evolution of Eisenhower's concept of role of Cabinet; mechanics of meetings; Eisenhower's management of Cabinet and Security Council meetings; effect of debate on Eisenhower's decisions; Bradley "Brad" H. Patterson [Assistant to the Secretary to the Cabinet]; Cabinet debate over increased aid to education; Flemming's observations about the importance of Eisenhower's use of Cabinet and Security Council and the debate format; ODM and Civil Defense as separate entities; development of plan for relocation of government in event of attack; Eisenhower's interest in relocation sites; Flemming's relationship with Eisenhower; Nelson Rockefeller, Milton Eisenhower, and Flemming; the J. Robert Oppenheimer case; creation of the Health, Education, and Welfare department; Eisenhower's interest in and support for a federal program of medical insurance for older persons; Eisenhower's view of issues on a national basis (medical insurance, education, etc.) rather than a local; Eisenhower on civil rights, schools, and racial integration.

[Dwight D. Eisenhower Library Oral History, interview by Dr. Thomas Soapes, November 24, 1978]