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**POSITION:** Representative  
**STATE:** IL  
**PARTY:** R  
**CHAMBER:** HR  
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**INTERVIEWER:** Fenno, Richard F., Jr.  
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**Richard F. Fenno, Jr., Oral History Collection**

Re. attitude towards bureaus: "You've got to be critical. You've got to take the attitude that 'you people are coming up here and asking too much . . . trying to feather your own nest and your friends' nests, too.'" "You have to be a real horses ---."

He talked a lot about the fact that work on the committee is "very confining." . . . "It's no fun to sit in there. . . . You have to pry the information out of these people who are all there to justify their programs. You get no publicity, and for all you know people back home think you're sitting on your prat." He was impressed by the fact that last year he was on the floor a lot and knew what was going on, whereas now he's in committee all the time. "When I went back home and started to talk, I found that I knew less about what was going on than I did when I was a freshman." Now his committee work is over, he said, and he can get out on the floor and offer amendments. But if you want to get to know some particular area of government, Appropriations is the place to do it.

"A subcommittee report is, as a matter of fact, the Chairman's report. That's the thing that impressed me. On a legislative committee, you get a chance to contribute to the report, but not here. . . . These fellows want to report a bill that they can all agree on. They don't want any minority report -- about all you can do is say, 'I reserve on that question, Mr. Chairman.' . . . Jamie Whitten runs that Committee. 'This is my committee, and this is the way it's going to be.' He loads that report up with things about cotton. He's the spokesman for the cotton interests. . . . If you're a subcommittee chairman, it's your committee. These subcommittee chairmen are actually equal

in power to many chairmen of the legislative committees."

How on Committee? As soon as Vursell was defeated in November, he wrote to John Taber and said he wanted to be on the Appropriations Committee. "I said, 'Mr. Taber, I know you are acquainted with my conservative views,' and 'I'd like to get on the committee.' I know how John works, and I knew that would score points with him. . . . Well, he wrote Joe Martin and told him, and said that as far as he was concerned I ought to be on the committee. . . . We stacked our committee with conservatives this year." He said he also "lined up" the members of the common committees from the big states -- When he learned of the vacancy he went around to see if anyone senior to him from Illinois wanted it -- It turned out that the only other man who did was his roommate, Jim Collier, with the same seniority as he -- "So it developed into a choice between Jim and me."

He sees the committee as split between liberals and conservatives -- conservatives are Southern Democrats and Republicans.

Why on committee? He was on Government Operations -- If he had stayed, "I'd be fifth in seniority, with twenty years in age between me and the next man above me. So I probably could have been chairman of that committee some day. I'll never get to be chairman of Appropriations. But you have to ask yourself whether you want to wait around to be a chairman some day, or whether you want to get in on things and wield a little influence around here before that time."

"As meticulously as we go into these items, we don't have enough time. . . . Just think of all the water in that defense bill. . . . We ought to go down into every single line item, but we don't have the time."

He sees pressure to conform in the subcommittee and full committee.

Re. the Senate: "That's the thing that gripes me. We do all the work on the bill, and they always beef it up. . . . It gets so that people here will say, 'I don't believe in this cut, but let's do it anyway. The Senate will want to raise it and we can use it, and we can use it for bargaining with them.'"