

MARK ANDREWS

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At end, "That's what you've hired for to look out for the interests of your state and you hope for the nation as a whole. To coin a phrase what's good for North Dakota is good for the nation--to coin a phrase."

When I went in, he said he'd seen me up in the gallery when he was presiding and I said I watched the Budget Resolution and yesterday when he was trying to get his Transportation conference report approved. "I was just trying to get the conference report passed. But everyone gets very nervous when they are fighting over something like abortion as they were yesterday. When I asked for the floor, DeConcini objected. I went over and told him what I wanted and he said fine. Then I tried again and Packwood objected. I got him calmed down. Then I had to explain to Metzenbaum that I just wanted to get the conference report approved. Once I got the natives calmed down, we passed the legislation in three minutes. That's not a bad way to pass legislation. You could never do it that way in the House." He explained that "People are afraid that if you get the floor you will off with something else." So the Senate runs on trust in the presence of loose rules. MA had to convince them he wasn't going to try anything.

I said I wanted to ask him about his first year. "It's been a fast track and we've been very busy. I may have missed something of the Senate because of Mary's health which, while it's improving is not improving a whole lot. So that has kept it from being as good a year as it would have been. But that's not the Senate's fault."

Then he got into the Wall Street Journal article. "As part of the 'popsicle brigade' I don't know how successful I have been. The Wall Street Journal doesn't think much of the freshmen. What bothers me is that articles

like that decrease respect for people in the Senate and that tears at the fabric of the country. People who have been elected from their states deserve a certain respect. Disagree with them, yes; but don't cultivate disrespect for them. That was the damage done by Watergate and a lot of the reporting since Watergate has had the same effect... (He talked about "Jerry Denton" and his concern over teenage pregnancy. "I don't remember which movie it was; but I went to see one and I can tell you I was not titillated by it.")

"I came off pretty well--as an effective champion of rural electrification and farm subsidies. You couldn't ask for anything nicer in my state. They called me parochial. Well, parochial may be a damning term in the Wall Street Journal but it's a favorable word in North Dakota. Beside I happen to think those programs are good for the nation, too, but they never let us talk about that side of things."

He kept coming back to this theme throughout the interview--that he was not as parochial as they think. First his ND programs are good for the country. Second, he pushed for programs that were national in scope.

"Our senior colleagues may think we are a bunch of dummies and dolts, but they come around and ask us for help with a bridge or a rail line. They seem to appreciate the help, too. At least that's what they say. I don't know who that reporter talked to."

He asked me what I thought of the article. I said I thought the reporter was using one ruler to measure too many people who came from too many states and backgrounds and that I wasn't sure what that ruler was. He laughed and seemed to agree. Then he started talking about a couple of the things he had done during the session.

"We had a fun deal with the Burlington Northern railroad. They announced that they were going to abandon 1300 miles of track in North Dakota. That's an awful lot of track. It was murder, really, a slaughter--which would have done great damage to the state. So we put a provision in the appropriations bill which said that none of the money appropriated to the ICC could be used to process more than 950 miles of railroad abandonments by any one company in any one state. We thought that Burlington Northern would say that they were withdrawing plans to abandon 2/3 of those lines; then we would claim that the amendment had had its effect; we would withdraw the amendment; and the episode would be ended. But a Vice President of the railroad, Mr. Kaufman, attacked me and attacked the amendment as 'special interest' legislation. He used some very choice phrases--Bill has them all. It was so dumb. His attack stimulated my imagination. We changed the wording so that no railroad anywhere in the country could abandon more than 350 miles of track. We changed it from special interest legislation to national interest legislation. And it passed the Senate. That was on a Friday. That weekend, the Railroad Executives were having a conference at some foxy resort in Virginia, with their ladies. They cancelled their conference and came up here on Monday to lobby against the Andrews amendment. They appeared out here in the hall, 'en masse'. I spoke to them briefly and went off to a budget meeting. Two of them walked with me--the VP of the Southern RR and another one. We bumped into John Warner and I said to him 'John I know you'd be happy to vote against the Andrews amendment calling for restrictions on rail line abandonment, wouldn't you?' And he said 'Are you nuts? I'd never vote against an amendment like that.' We ran into two or three other colleagues too. Those railroad men were in shock. Their chins were resting on their navels by the

time we got to the Budget Committee. They soon came around to the position that they didn't care what we did to Burlington Northern so long as we didn't apply it to them. They asked us to change the legislation, in conference, back from national interest to special interest legislation. We did. And we worked some more magic. We not only said none of the money could be used this year, but we said no money could ever or hereafter be used to process the abandonment of more than 350 miles per year in North Dakota. That word 'hereafter' is a wonderful word. It's outrageous that a healthy railroad should try to abandon that much track of such vital importance to a state like North Dakota. If what we did is special interest legislation or an abuse of power than so be it."

What kind of Senator do you want to be?

"I guess I'll just have to be myself. I've gotten along pretty well in the House by just being myself, so I'll have to stick with it. A farmer from a farm state comes to the Senate with some pretty fixed notions. Maybe in the House, you ask what kind of member you want to be, but by the time you get to the Senate, that's pretty well determined. So I'll be the same as always." (I missed some of this--but I think he began to talk some about the committees here, as he did later.)

"I'm still working to fill in spots on my staff. I've been a little slow to build up the staff because I wanted to learn things myself first and then fill in where I need help. Transportation is well covered by Chip and Grace. They are doing a good job for me there. My Budget committee is doing well and my Agriculture committee person is good. The constituency operation I brought over from the House and that is going pretty good. Our PR is weak--compared to what ^{organ}Dugan gets. But that has been my lowest priority. My Republican friends are worried that ^{organ}Dugan gets so much publicity

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and they want me to get more. But I think you can oversell yourself if you aren't careful. I believe you can flood the market. People will get tired of it. We've only sent two newsletters out this year; that's partly because I've been too busy. I was talking to Jim Abdnor and he hasn't sent any out. ^{or so} ~~Dugan~~ contradicts himself all over the place. First he is on one side of the issue, then on the other; but he certainly is getting blazing headlines. If that's the way you have to play the game, we'll do it. We've got time. PR is our main weakness. But it is still my lowest priority."

"I'm happy with my committee assignments. Early on I thought about starting off on a whole new career, but I decided what the hell, I don't want to do that. I'll stick with Appropriations. I've been doing it for so long and I know it so well that it would be teaching an old dog new tricks... My committee assignments were perfect for protecting rural electrification. We used the budget committee to track what Stockman and company were doing early on so we could stop him on the budget resolution. Then we could keep him from cutting during appropriations process. And we could protect the program in the authorizing committee. I had all three legs of the three-legged stool. It wasn't a matter of expanding the program. It was a matter of keeping it from being cut."

Later he said "Maybe McClure's committee might be better for me on some energy matters but I have two legs of the stool there."

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"I went on the Budget Committee because Pete Domenici and one other Senator--Tower I think--asked me to. They said they wanted me because I was familiar with the Appropriations process. I told them that my experience on the Appropriations committee told me that if that committee did its job, the Budget Committee would be unnecessary. They laughed and said that's why wanted me."

Parochial

"We had a fun time on the budget committee with my 500M amendment for NIH, capitation grants for nurses education and rural health. Dave Stockman fought it, but we got it put in the Budget committee. I got the Republicans and all the Democrats to vote for it. When we got to the floor, Strom Thurmond wanted to knock out the Andrews amendment and transfer the money to the veterans. Now that was some opposition. But Baker joined the budget committee in voting against Thurmond and we held the 500M. There was nothing parochial about that. You recall that I was one of only three Republicans to get the endorsement of the nurses in the last campaign. It was Javits, Mathias and myself. So I guess I haven't been all that parochial."

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"Our transportation subcommittee was only one of two appropriations subcommittees to be granted -- an exception by the committee -- State Justice was the other -- to the proposed second round of cuts. We came in under the original budget, but we reallocated money among the programs within the total. We changed around the money for Amtrak, the Coast Guard and put in some innovative ideas in the bill. That's what the appropriations committee is for in my opinion. We should be allowed to say how the money should be allocated. We hold the hearings, we know what we are doing, we have the expertise. We know where the waste is. I could go through the Ag. Bill like the back of my hand cutting unproductive programs by 10% and never hurting agriculture as a whole. Of course, Stockman fought against our reallocations. We won. We did what an Appropriations Committee should do."

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We spent three hours last night in the conference committee on defense appropriations arguing for 300 million for some misc. Coast Guard cutters. I became interested in this some time ago. Coast Guard cutters revert to the navy anyway in time of war. And it's a lot easier to have a Coast

Guard presence in the Carribean than a naval presence. Dave Stockman fought us every inch of the way on it, but I got it in the committee and last night Addabbo agreed to put it in the final bill. There's nothing parochial about that. Those Coast Guard cutters aren't built in North Dakota, aren't stationed in North Dakota and don't patrol in North Dakotan waters. That's in the national interest, as I see it. What kind of a Senator would you say that was?" "I said 'effective.' And he said "That's not so bad, is it?"

Throughout the interview, there was this constant reminder of Al Hunt's article that tagged him "as "parochial."

He talked for a long time, at the early part of the interview--when he first discussed the Wall Street Journal article--about rural electrification, FFA, GT, and need for electric generation and how this is a matter of natural concern to a nation that wants energy independence. If more electricity is produced in North Dakota there will be that much more independence of oil producing countries. He wants mine coal generating plants to produce electricity and wants more of them "because we have to wheel that power over long distances and get too much line loss." "If I can sit here with 4 four-star generals and an assistant secretary of state asking me for 4 billion dollars for a weapons system, then I ought to be able to ask for 300 million for rural electrification loans. Especially when the administration claims to want energy independence. What could be better than to make North Dakotans more self-sufficient in heating and at half the price of oil, too. Dave Stockman thinks it will crowd out private borrowing." He went on at length, too, about how the federal gov't ought to get on with nuclear power, that each state ought to use the energy source it has.

"I'm taking John Block out to Fargo tomorrow. I'm going to take him out to the farm. I'll show him the cattle and the combines and we'll play farmer for ten minutes or so. Then I'll take him in to my shop. We'll go from 16° below into a warm room and I'll say 'John old boy do you know how the room is heated? I'll tell him it's heated by electricity--by electric lines laid under the slabs. I'll tell him that the electricity costs 65¢ less than an equivalent amount of oil. That's one of the things I have in mind in inviting him to visit North Dakota. Many times you can plant an idea more effectively that way--he'll go back, I hope, and remember what he learned about electric generation."

Mary
Are you comfortable in the Senate? "I'm comfortable in the Senate, but not as comfortable as I would have been if Mary were around. When we are in session at night, she and I would have gone off to a nice restaurant with a piano and violin deal and then come back to work. But I'm glad I made the move. There are a lot of things you bring with you that you can use in the Senate. But you still know you're a freshman."

He talked about the pay. "It's a good job, but we're underpaid. I know 60,000 sounds like a lot and it's more than a professor makes; but it's not a lot if you have to keep up two houses and go back and forth to the state."