

Barber Conable

February 16, 1972

*Butt away
for
concrete*

On redistricting, how did you do? "Pretty damn good. I lost Orleans County and I'm sorry to lose it. It's a troubled county, but I have an awful lot of good friends there. I lost all the part in Erie County and I'm not sorry. I'll say goodbye to them without a single backward glance. That's where all the Conservative votes were cast against me, by the Polish voters in Lancaster. I'll pick up Livingston County and a few towns in Ontario County. I'll lose 3 towns in Monroe County, Sweden, Hamlin and Clarkson--good Republican towns. I don't like to lose them. Then I pick up Henrietta. Originally I had Mendon and Rush, but Frank said he had to have them--that it was a Democratic district. I said, 4,000 votes? He said, well, maybe he could hold it but not the next person. He says he's slipped from 72% to 70%! In Albany, they said, 'Barber, just tell us you object and we'll change it back again.' I said, 'No, you just say, 'No changes.' They said, 'We don't want trouble; but if you say the word, we'll change it back.' I said, 'No, I've got to live with these people, so I'm not going to object.' The way it is, the district is odd-shaped. Frank has a finger sticking right into my district. I call it 'the finger.' But if I fought for Mendon and Rush, Frank

would convince Bill Dwyer to take some more of the city away from me--probably the 23rd Ward, which has been a good Republican ward. So, I ^{have} ~~was~~ gotten it either way. As it was, Frank got the Republicans to take away the area on my side of the river that includes the government buildings, the main Kodak office building--all the prestige areas downtown. So he can say, "Welcome to the 34th District" when he greets people at the Flagship."

Harry, too, stressed loss of this downtown area, and Barber Conable's first comment to me was "Frank screwed me in the redistricting."

He said Herman Scherbeli ^{nee bel} didn't want to be ranking new member on Ways and Means--but Barber went quickly to him to offer him support, "collegial leadership," etc. And Administration interceded to keep him out of a primary fight--so he could spend time with committee.

Barber turning down interviews to keep from seeming to be the power on the committee--"My reach has exceeded my grasp."

"The bussing issue is tearing this place apart. People are becoming so irrational--talking about kids having to ride 30 minutes on a bus to get to school. So far, I've refused to sign the discharge petition supporting the Constitutional amendment prohibiting bussing. I'm against bussing, but I don't think we ought to prohibit bussing. And certainly I don't think we should tamper with the Constitution in this way. I'm afraid the pressure will get so great I may have to come out in favor of it."

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Part of the congressman's leadership consists of keeping his options open and therefore educating people to the options. Difference between people and congressman is sense for the options. In that sense, "apt of the possible." "Leadership isn't black and white."