

Barber and His "State"

January 31, 1973

"I was screwed by the Republicans on the Ways and Means vacancies
(see attached E+N attack)
and I'm mad about it. I don't give a damn if I am abrasive--and I
guess I am. But I'll have to lay low and choose my spots very carefully.
I don't want to lose my effectiveness... I think I'm still awfully important to Wilbur.
I think he regards me as salvagable--not like Corman and Gibbons. But
he won't like what I did today and I'll feel the impact of it for awhile....
Tell me, how should I deal with Wilbur?" (My answer: Make damn sure you
get along with Herman Schneebeli.)

* The Wall Street Journal wants to do a profile on me. I suppose I
ought not to do too much of that. But I said he could. Last year, Kevin
Phillips wanted to do a column on me and I said no. I felt I didn't
want to seem like the leader of the Republicans, with Herman Schneebeli
coming in as ranking minority member. Now I'm not feeling so circum-
spect any more."

"I hope Herman stays ranking member until Joel Broyhill and Harold
Collier leave. But I'm not sure he cares enough about it. That's why
he's probably not mad about my speaking up to Wilbur as I did today. I
had quite a confrontation with Wilbur. No one on my side said anything--
except Herman who leaned over and said 'It's all right, Barber, Wilbur
talked to me about it.' ~~He~~ Talked to me about it! That's what Wilbur
will do--tell Herman, and only what he wants to ^{him} know. Wilbur's ^a pretty devious

Conable

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fellow--no straight line between two points. And if he blows in
Herman's ear, Herman will follow him anywhere."

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

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PA23

Old Guard House Republicans Beat Back 'Young Turks'

A SERIES of smashing defeats for pragmatic young Republican congressmen behind closed doors of the old guard-dominated House Republican caucus has gravely deepened the depression brought on by haughty and inattentive treatment from President Nixon's oval office.

Those caucus decisions systematically cut off new blood from flowing into critical power slots, both on the Ways and Means Committee and as ranking Republican members on other committees. With the old guard, in iron-fisted control of the Republican cloakroom, the most powerful figure shaping the party's posture there is almost unknown away from the Capitol's inner sanctum: 78-year-old Rep. Les Arends of Illinois, House minority whip since the third term of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The consequence is less ideological than tactical. Arends-style Republicanism, though indisputably conservative, is most concerned with maintaining the institutional status quo, especially the rigid seniority system. It seeks accommodations with the Democratic leadership and avoids confrontations with the White House. Not surprisingly, it has driven many ambitious young Republicans out of the House after a few terms of frustration.

Arends' dominance stems from control of the House Republican Committee on Committees, an unwieldy 46-

member body which determines the party makeup on legislative committees. As a congressman from Wisconsin and chairman of the House Republican caucus, Melvin R. Laird championed the Republican young turks before moving to the Pentagon in 1969. Since then, Arends has been unchallenged.

In this year's secret sessions of the Committee on Committees, Arends dis-

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agreed with Minority Leader Gerald Ford of Michigan on some committee assignments and won out each time. But there was no opposition from Ford on the committee's biggest issue: A hotly contested vacancy on Ways and Means, the most important legislative committee in Congress.

The young turks were pushing Rep. William Steiger, 35, a moderate liberal from Wisconsin with a reputation for aggressiveness and skill during six years in the House. As Secretary of Defense, Laird vainly intervened in Steiger's behalf with old friends in Congress and even attempted, unsuc-

cessfully, to break the White House neutrality.

Oil interests, generous contributors to Republicans, wanted a Texan (Rep. Bill Archer of Houston) and not Steiger. Arends rammed Archer home, privately suggesting that young Bill Steiger had moved a bit too much to the left since coming here.

Nobody could accuse Ohio's Rep. Clarence (Bud) Brown Jr., 46, of left-wing deviationism, but he lost a bid for another opening on Ways and Means. Whatever their ideological disagreements, Steiger and Brown are both hard-hitting partisans who would challenge back-scratching accommodations within the committee between Republicans and the masterful Democratic chairman, Wilbur D. Mills.

The same players struggled last week in the House Republican caucus. Steiger, representing the young turks, argued that Rep. John Erlenborn, 46, of Illinois should jump one notch in seniority over New York's Rep. Frank Horton as ranking Republican on the Government Operations Committee. Erlenborn is a moderate conservative and Horton a pure Eastern liberal, but again ideology was not the issue.

Arends and the old guard guaranteed Horton's easy victory by arguing that conservative philosophical annoy-

ance with Horton should be ignored because the seniority system must not be splintered. Left unsaid was Arends' distaste for the bumptious style of Erlenborn in refusing to cozy up to old line Democratic leaders across the aisle.

In seeking support, Horton had underlined his intimate collaboration with the Government Operations Chairman Rep. Chet Holifield of California, a pillar of the Democratic establishment. Erlenborn made just the opposite argument: He would give Holifield hell, challenging the lopsided ratio of 50 Democrats and 4 Republicans on the committee's staff.

Foxy, silver-haired Les Arends has not challenged such inequities during 38 years in the House (34 under Democratic leadership). Instead, he has worked quietly for old guard control, making sure this year that, while reform seeps in elsewhere on Capitol Hill, iron seniority still governs House Republicans.

No wonder it is a depressing time for the young turks. They have lacked a patron in leadership ranks since Laird's departure and their own ranks are steadily depleted by frustrated young congressmen running for the Senate or entering the administration. Worst of all, Mr. Nixon has made abundantly clear that he could not care less.