

Congressmen Vent Wrath at Airlines

By Jack Anderson

Congressmen are so irate over the treatment they are getting from the airlines that they have called a House hearing to vent their feelings.

The final indignity, which touched off the hearing, occurred to Rep. John Murphy, (D-N.Y.). Although he had reservations on an American Airlines flight, the door was slammed in his face and he was turned away.

Steaming, he wrote to all his colleagues who fly the New York City-Washington run, asking about their experiences. Almost to a man, they agreed the service was deplorable.

"Anything you can do to improve Eastern and American service, which is horrible as we both know..." wrote Rep. Edward Koch (D-N.Y.), "would make you eligible for a congressional medal of honor!"

Rep. John Wydler (R-N.Y.), citing his experience with American Airlines, said "Their service is so bad that it has to be intentional."

"It is rare," complained Rep.

Angelo Roncallo (R-N.Y.), "that I have departed from New York on the announced time and rarer still to arrive in Washington on time."

Rep. Frank Brasco, (D-N.Y.) rated the service between the two cities "subcaliber to horrible." Shirley Chisholm, the outspoken congresswoman from Brooklyn, called the service "unsatisfactory" and urged "congressional hearings to investigate the problem."

Rep. John Hunt, (R-N.J.) said the airlines had "priced me out of business as a commuter. I go by train now for less than half the price."

Congressmen from other areas joined in the protest. "Eastern Airlines service between Syracuse and the South," wrote Rep. William Walsh, (R-N.Y.), "has been deteriorating for several months and has now reached the point where I no longer try to fly between Washington and Syracuse."

Indeed, grumbling was heard from congressional commuters from Georgia to California.

Thus fortified, Murphy

called upon Rep. Harley Staggers, (D-W.Va.), the powerful House commerce committee chairman, to hold hearings, which are expected to be scheduled within the next two weeks.

Bugging Battle—Two House Democrats have formally accused Rep. Sam Steiger, (R-Ariz.) of bugging the same adversaries he has accused of bugging him.

This remarkable counter wiretap charge was made by Congressmen Morgan Murphy, (D-Ill.) and Jerome Waldie, (D-Calif.) in defiance of the House back-scratching tradition that members of Congress must not take one another's name in vain.

Contending they wouldn't be hypocrites for the sake of tradition, Murphy and Waldie wrote stinging minority opinions to a still-secret House crime report charging Steiger with eavesdropping.

What brought up the controversy was an allegation in the secret report that Emprise, a giant food services chain with past Mafia links, had bugged Steiger.

The two congressmen complained it was hypocritical not to mention that Steiger had also bugged an Emprise representative. Steiger has admitted it was "unsavory," and both the FBI and California police are investigating to determine whether it was also criminal.

Vesco's Manners—Robert Vesco, perhaps the world's fanciest fugitive, roared into Antigua, West Indies, last week on his private jet and nearly caused another international incident.

Eyewitnesses have told us that Vesco piled out of his plane, rolled up to the yacht "Romantaca" with three cab-loads of bags, boarded the "horribly huge" craft and promptly snapped the anchor chain of the yacht "Ariels."

Several indignant witnesses chased after Vesco's yacht in their own boats. But Vesco sailed on and the anchor finally was lost at sea. The pursuers yelled at him to stop, but Vesco shouted back: "You know my address. Send me a bill."