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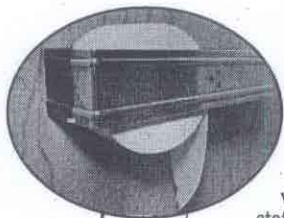
BLE SOURCE

yd Grove

Senator on a Roll?

Two months after it happened, Washington insiders up and down Pennsylvania Avenue are still buzzing about an unusual incident involving Sen. Arlen Specter.

We hear that the 70-year-old former prosecutor, who sometimes grills Senate witnesses in a style once reserved for Torquemada, was at his intimidating best behind closed doors as he harangued Justice Department and FBI officials over the department's botched Wen Ho Lee case. The Pennsylvania Republican was playing his role as chairman of the special Judiciary subcommittee investigating the government's failed attempt to throw the book at the Chinese-born Energy Department scientist for alleged espionage. After grilling several terrified public servants in Dirksen Room 226, Specter called a brief recess.



meanwhile, authorized his chief

Standing up, the jacketless Specter turned to leave, revealing to astonished witnesses and staffers alike a two-foot length of toilet paper trailing from the seat of his pants. While people in the hearing room exchanged significant glances, we hear that nobody dared utter a word, let alone alert the irritated senator. It was a classic "Emperor's New Clothes" moment. Worst of all, when Specter returned, his paper tail was still there.

When we phoned Specter's office yesterday to ask about the incident, a press staffer told us: "If people are buzzing about this, they must be very bored." Specter,



FILE PHOTOS

Specter: Creating a stir in committee.

of staff, David Urban, to fax us the following: "If the tissue issue is whether I use toilet paper, the answer is yes." In an apparent attack on our journalistic standards compared with those of another newspaper, Specter continued: "This story hardly merits the New York Times credo 'All the News That's Fit to Print,' even on toilet paper."

Touché, Senator.