

The Dean, Gurney Faceoff

Washington

In his opening statement to the Senate Watergate Committee Monday, John W. Dean III dropped something of a challenge to the political manhood of Senator Edward J. Gurney.

Yesterday, the wavy-haired Florida republican picked up the gauntlet with obvious relish, subjecting Dean to the longest interrogation by far of an committee member since the hearings began May 17.

Dean, in his Monday remarks, recalled that in White House discussions of the potential danger of members of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, no one was much worried about Gurney.

"Senator Gurney was considered a sure friend and rotector of the President's interest" who "would not have to be told to do so," Dean said.

DEAL

Most of those following the hearings speculated how Gurney, after that kind of rave review from the White House, would deal with Dean.

So the crowded caucus room of the old Senate Office Building was quietly a buzz yesterday morning when the two faced off under the glaring television lights.

It all started very politely with Gurney, looking cool and photogenic in a light gray suit, blue shirt and paisley tie, saying:

"Good morning, Mr. Dean."

"Good morning, Senator," Dean, equally well turned-out in a darker gray suit, striped shirt and red tie, responded.

DOWNHILL

Things rather went downhill after that, and at the conclusion of the questioning Gurney thanked Dean for his "patience."

"I thank the senator for plied, in what may have been a final thrust for a touche. 'I think they were very good.'"

In between, Gurney probably didn't do anything that will get his name added to whatever "enemies" list the White House is keeping these days.

But if he didn't do much to shatter the White House assessment of him as a friend, John Dean might have some different ideas.

SARCASM

Gurney, his well-modulated accent frequently thick with barely concealed sarcasm or incredulity, took Dean slowly and meticulously over his accounts of pre-Watergate discussions of political espionage and sabotage. He then gave special attention to the 34-year-old former counsel's recollections of the coverup, particularly the meetings, in which he said he had discussed the affairs with President Nixon.

But some of his sharpest inquiry, he saved for probing Dean's handling of \$15,200 in Republican campaign funds that were left in Dean's White House safe.

Dean has acknowledged that he "borrowed" \$4850 from the funds to pay for his honeymoon last October and other personal expenses. He says he put in a personal check to cover it.

"How were you going to spend the \$4850?" Gurney asked.

"To the best of my recollection," replied Dean, "I had made reservations for an accommodation in Florida that was going to u \$100 a day, I had hoped to spend about two weeks down there.

"I also had food expenses. I was going to have people come in and do the serving, and travel expenses, and I assumed that just \$5000 would cover it."

RIPPLE

"It seems like a lot of money for a honeymoon," Gurney

"It seems like a lot of money for a honeymoon," Gurney said, bringing a ripple of laughter from the spectators.

"Well, sir, as I say," Dean said, still unsmiling, "I also was having my yard done that day and I thought I might have to pay for having dirt delivered. My patio had been repaired, I had a whole host of other expenses I thought I was going to be hit with."

"You can't give a better explanation of how you were going to spend \$4850" Gur-



UPI Telephoto

SENATOR EDWARD J. GURNEY OF FLORIDA
His voice was laced with sarcasm

ney pressed.

Continuing his apparent attempt to discredit Dean as a witness, Gurney finally elicited from him that he had never really had time to go on much of a honeymoon.

"As I said, at one point in time," Dean said, "well, I began using it for personal expenses."

Dean, still unfaltering, later conceded that his checking account at the time he took the money would not have covered the check in its place. He also said that he had put the money back once and then taken it out again, finally replacing it in

April.

"Do you know this is a crime, Mr. Dean?" Gurney asked.

"I am not aware what crime it is, no," Dean replied.

"Isn't it embezzlement?" Gurney asked.

"There was no intention on my part never to account for the full amount," Dean said.

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