

After a Polite Opening, Gurney and Dean Fence

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WASHINGTON, June 27—The Senate Watergate hearings turned into a verbal fencing match for more than three hours today, but if any blood was drawn it could probably have been sopped up by a Band-Aid.

In his 245-page opening statement on Monday, John W. Dean 3d, former counsel to the President, dropped something of a challenge to the political manhood of Senator Edward J. Gurney.

Today, the wavy-haired Florida Republican picked up the gauntlet with obvious relish, subjecting Mr. Dean to the longest interrogation that has been indulged in by any committee member or counsel since the hearings began May 17.

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

'A Sure Friend'

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

Most of those following the hearings have speculated ever since about how Senator Gurney, after that rave review from the White House, would deal with Mr. Dean.

So the crowded Caucus Room of the Old Senate Office Building was quietly a buzz at 10:22 this morning when the two faced off after Mr. Dean had presented a series of documents on the White House's "political enemies project."

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

"Good morning, Mr. Dean."

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

Things went downhill a bit from there until 3:50 this afternoon when Senator Gurney thanked Mr. Dean for his "patience."

Questions 'Very Good'

"I thank the Senator for his questions," Mr. Dean replied in what may have been a final thrust for a touché. "I think they were very good."

In between, Senator Gurney probably didn't do anything that would get his name added to any current White House "enemies" list.

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

Senator Gurney, speaking with barely concealed sarcasm or incredulity, took Mr. Dean slowly and carefully over his accounts of pre-Watergate discussions of political espionage and sabo-

tage. He then gave special attention to the 34-year-old former counsel's recollections of the cover-up, particularly the meetings in which he said he had discussed the affairs with President Nixon.

But some of his sharpest inquiry dealt with Mr. Dean's handling of \$15,000 in Republican campaign funds that were left in the counsel's White House safe.

Mr. Dean has acknowledged that he "borrowed" \$4,850 from the funds to pay for his honeymoon last October and other personal expenses. He says he subsequently put in a personal check to cover the "loan."

"How were you going to spend the \$4,850?" Mr. Gurney asked.

"To the best of my recollection," relied Mr. Dean, his brow creased, his demeanor serious as it has been all his three days on the witness stand, "I had made reservations for an accommodation in Florida that was going to run \$100 a day. I had hoped to spend about two weeks down there.

"I also had four expenses—I was going to have people come in and do the serving—and travel expenses and I assumed that just \$5,000 would cover it."

Senator Gurney looked doubtful.

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

Had Yard Done

"Well, sir, as I say," Mr. Dean, still unsmiling, "I also was having my yard done that day and I thought I might have to pay 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 that night I walked in."

"You can't give a better explanation of how you were going to spend \$4,850?" Mr. Gurney pressed.

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

"Well, what did you do with the \$4,850?" the Senator repeated.

"Well, as I said, at one point in time," Mr. Dean said, "Well, I began using it for personal expenses."

Mr. Dean, still unfaltering, later conceded that his checking account at the time he took the money would not have covered the funds. 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?" Senator Gurney asked.

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

"Isn't it embezzlement?" Mr. Gurney wanted to know.

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



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John W. Dean 3d, right, arranging material on arrival yesterday. At left is Robert C. McCandless, his lawyer.