

Interview with Rep. Charles A. Boyle (D-IL)

12 June 1959

General remarks: Says he didn't want to come to Congress in the first place, but Chicago party leaders wanted to balance the ticket—he was Mr. Illinois and Father of the Year—“I'm a member of the Kelly-Nash Machine.” First Democrat elected in 130 years—eight children—went to work in cigar factory at age of seven—should be retired by now—not very capable.

“Sometimes, I go home sick at night. When they start talking about 2XrMB, etc., they just leave you. But it's a thrilling experience and a real education, and anybody who doesn't run against me and try to take it away from me is a damn fool.”

Re. older men on Committee: “It's a real help; and I was very sad when Wigglesworth (ranking minority member) and Scrivner (fourteen years on Committee) were defeated and taken off the subcommittee.” No partisanship here. [Richard B. Wigglesworth (R-MA) resigned in 1958, and Errett P. Scrivner (R-KS) was defeated for reelection in 1958.]

“I'm getting an education, and I study four or five hours a day.”

Why on Committee? Did he want it? (He was on Judiciary.) “I didn't... In fact, I refused it, and even suggested who I thought ought to have it. They laughed at me and said, ‘Why don't you quit while you're ahead’... Well, the more you don't want a thing, the more they want you. So the leadership [Thomas O'Brien, D-IL] asked me to take it again.” The Speaker had nothing to do with it—all done through O'Brien, whom Boyle thinks is the equal of anyone in the House.

Would he go off the Committee? Sure, I'd go off Appropriations if the leadership asked me to and explained to me why it was important.” This sheds light on why he went on—he wouldn't refuse O'Brien—a party-oriented man.

“There are a hell of a lot of talented men down here. That's one thing I want to leave you with.” He is impressed, as Rep. Alfred E. Santangelo (D-NY) is, with talented men, and he just listens—maybe on the majority side, where you have twenty-eight or twenty-nine men above you, the feeling of being overwhelmed is greater than if you are low man on the minority side.

Re. agencies: “They call us the murder-board; and they say, ‘What have you got, ice water in your veins?’... (I tell 'em I ---- ice water). But I know that there never was an admiral who had enough of a fleet, there never was a general who had enough soldiers, and there never was a newspaper editor who had enough reporters.” He is talking apropos of Defense Subcommittee.

He declined to say whether he had become more liberal—too many factors playing on him, he said, in a torrent of verbiage which I could not decipher, and he could not use appropriately.