

Now, that is how she got off the payroll. So what I am trying to say here, Mr. Chairman, very briefly, without a prepared statement, is that the House Administration Committee is the committee which has the responsibility for checking vouchers. We have tightened up our procedures. But let me point out to you, Mr. Chairman, that I believe that Congressmen are as good or maybe a little better than the average constituency which sends them here. Are we worse than the boys we appoint to West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy? They operate on the honor system and occasionally it breaks down: then something is done and the matter is adjudicated and a few of them get kicked out.

The House Administration Committee, because it could not operate any other way, Mr. Chairman, has operated on the honor system. We assumed that when a chairman sent over a voucher saying that this service has been performed or that this person had worked on this trip had been made on committee business, it had been made in that way.

Let me enlighten you a bit about these airline tickets—and we got a lot of criticism about that as a committee. Do you realize you can go and buy, by check, by credit card, if you have one, or cash, down here a ticket in anybody's name and nobody asks you when you get on the plane—you have all traveled—"Is this you?"

If somebody at the airline counter knows you, they will say, "Have a nice trip, Mr. Harris," "Have a nice trip, Mr. Coleman"; but they don't say, "This name is Jones here, what is your name, and produce identification."

We had no knowledge this was going on until a member of that committee brought a rumor to us that this was going on. Then we didn't act precipitously and rush to the press. We brought in the vouchers and we had them audited. The only vouchers we asked any questions about, Mr. Chairman, were vouchers which were made to points on weekends for which no per diem was asked. We found after proper auditing that we believed something was wrong and we had hearings.

They were not television spectacles and there were not photographers crawling around under the table photographing the witnesses from all angles. I have been criticized because my name got in the paper as a result of this. I don't guess the press was altogether happy, but we gave the witnesses the option of being heard in executive session or public session. They all chose to be heard in executive session.

Exactly so nobody would say we were sweeping it under the rug or trying to cover it up, I appeared after each hearing before the press with a minority member, ranking minority member in most cases, and tried to answer their questions as much as I could and as honestly as I could. If I made a mistake there, well, I will argue about it.

There is one thing more I want to say and then I will submit to questions. I am getting a little tired of some people in Congress, not many, and a great many out, saying, "Well, all Congressmen are pretty bad and they all do this, why don't you investigate them?"

I answered this to the press on numerous occasions. I said:

I don't know or have not heard or no charge has been placed that any other chairman was using tickets with somebody else's name on them. I don't know or I have heard no charge made that any other Member had a person on the payroll who was in fact not complying with the law of either being in the District of Columbia or in his own State and if such is brought to our attention, we will look into it.