

George W. Andrews III

Rules Committee Expansion: Part Two

Detailed account of the floor activity and debate during the vote in 1961 to expand the Rules Committee.
Interview recorded May 21, 2010

One aspect of the debate, I remember, it was very dramatic. Judge Smith went down to, to speak against the bill. And, he said, "You know," he said, "I understand the criticism, I understand the criticism and I do better. I let stuff come to the floor. Unless, in good conscience, I just can't do it." And now, I mean the place just went berserk. Boos! I mean, it just, it was just— as soon as he said, "I just can't— if my conscience just wouldn't let me do it!" That just destroyed every bit of credibility he had in the prior statement. The roll call vote was very dramatic. Of course, they don't have the, back then, I mean, you didn't have the machine that lights your name up under "yea" or "nay." The voting was done by a roll call, and the reading clerk would call out each Member's name. He'd go through the roll twice. And if you didn't answer the first time, then they'd call your name out the second time. And people were intently listening to see how Congressman So-and-so was going to vote, because a lot of people didn't know. I remember after the first, the first round was called, I remember Art Cameron came up to me. Art was, ran the cloakroom. He said, "The Speaker's four votes ahead." People were tallying. People were counting as the votes were called out and the clerk— I mean, it's like he knew— it wasn't Joe Bartlett. I've forgotten who the reading clerk was. It was the Democratic reading clerk that was doing the call. He would call out each name very slowly. And there was a pause and then you would hear, "Aye!" or "No!" And then he'd call the next name out and it was like on that second roll call— each name that would come out, it was almost like you could make a drum roll. It was that dramatic. And, finally, when the dust settled, the Speaker won 217 to 212.