

Reporters Play 'Catch The Speaker'

By DICK WEST
 United Press International
 WASHINGTON (UPI)—Along about 11:45 a.m., on days when the House of Representatives is meeting at noon, the pace quickens.

Sometimes it only shifts from lethargy to languor, but it quickens nonetheless.

Reporters in the press gallery begin to vacate their typewriters and head for the doorway. They move at nearly the speed of light—a light tank.

A bystander unfamiliar with the folkways of the Capitol might wonder what had promoted the migration. And should he

inquire of its nature, his wonderment would surely increase.

He would be told that the correspondents crowding around the elevator were on their way to "catch the speaker."

"Catching the speaker" is a daily ritual in the House. As a form of exercise, it compares favorably with catching moonbeams.

For the benefit of those not conversant with journalistic jargon, I should explain that reporters do not actually "catch" the speaker in the sense of encompassing him with a lasso or standing under his window with a fireman's net.

The term means that they are going to the speaker's regular morning news conference and try to catch him saying something newsworthy. Which rarely happens either.

Over the years, speakers have been amazingly unspoken. The late Sam Rayburn, D-Tex., developed uncommunicativeness into a fine art. And John W. McCormack, D-Mass., the present speaker, has continued the tradition.

For a random sampling of McCormack's style I caught the speaker one morning this week when he admitted newsmen to his sanctum across the corridor

from the House chamber.

By my count, reporters got in four questions before the speaker left to preside over the noon session. He replied to all of them with trenchant circumnavigation.

One newsmen wanted to know whether, with the 1963 calendar now down to its last leaf, we could assume that the congressional adjournment rush was started.

"I'm so busy I haven't had a chance to level on that yet," the speaker said.

The other three queries evoked similar responses.

I personally did not feel aglow with enlightenment, but a veteran speaker-catcher told me the news conference had been more productive than some he had attended.

Condemnation Opponents Stand In Way Of Dunes Measure

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Opposition to the condemnation of private property appeared today to be the chief hurdle facing a Senate bill to create the Oregon Dunes National Seashore.

A bill to establish the 30,000-acre national seashore was approved last week by the Senate Interior Committee and is expected to be taken up shortly by the Senate.

Four Republican members of the committee said they had "serious misgivings" about the need for the park and served notice they would fight the condemnation provision.

Sen. Ernest Gruening, D-Alaska, also objected to condemnation of private land for the park but said he heartily approved establishment of the seashore.

A majority committee report on the legislation said the right

to condemn property was "essential" to assure full development of the proposed park.

"The committee feels, as courts have held, that the acquisition of some of our vanishing shorelines and other recreational areas is a public purpose justifying use of condemnation where necessary," the report said.

A contrary view was expressed by Sens. Gordon Allott, R-Colo.; Edwin L. Mechem, R-N.M.; Milward L. Simpson, R-Wyo., and Len B. Jordan, R-Idaho.

The four Republicans said they would seek to amend the bill on the floor to eliminate any provision for condemnation.

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of private property. They noted had not asked for unlimited right of condemnation.

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The Senate and House voted unanimously for the two resolutions and ordered copies of the Kennedy document forwarded to his widow, children and parents.

The resolutions were drafted on the final day of the session.

Malin C&E Market Christmas Shopper

The normally noisy house chamber was absolutely still during the reading of the Kennedy resolution, which was followed by comments of respect and grief by lawmakers.

Rep. Norman R. Howard, D-Portland, who introduced the resolution, commented to his colleagues "when President Kennedy visited Astoria recently he brushed aside secret service men and went among the people to greet them."

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