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## Frank to Friends, 23 November 1962

Frank E. (Frank Ellis) Smith (1918-1997)

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405 New Sprankle Building  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
November 23, 1962

Dear Friends:

I have had several inquiries about how I am faring in my new role. Everything so far has been entirely pleasant, and I am hopeful that it will continue on in this vein.

The other two directors--"Red" Wagner and A. R. Jones--have been especially nice in getting me acclimated, both to the work of a director and the general atmosphere. Although I didn't resign from Congress and begin my TVA work until the 14th, the family and I have been in Knoxville for about a month. We have a nice house and nice neighbors. Our address is 204 Suburban Road, Knoxville 19. Remember that we live in a development called Suburban Hills just off Highway 11 (the road to Chattanooga) west of town.

The law creating the TVA gives the Board of Directors the job of setting policy, and the job is just that. We pass upon the administrator's decisions affecting policy, but we don't administrate.

There is a formal meeting of the Board twice a month, but many more informal meetings which develop as various decisions have to be made. To keep current on everything, we have to read a lot of papers and correspondence. They have a pretty good routing system here, which doesn't seem to bog down too much. As Board members, we don't have any personal staff, except for a secretary. I inherited a very good one.

Next week I am starting a series of trips over the TVA area to personally inspect many of the operations and installations and to meet some of the people, like newspapermen and local officials with whom we have regular relationships. I am also engaged in a general process of background reading.

The TVA personnel that I've met so far are all very impressive in their knowledge of their jobs and in their devotion to the TVA program. There are certainly higher standards than in most other governmental work that I've run into, combined with a sense of purpose that can often easily be missed in other types of work. The lack of ostentation, ceremony, etc., is very appealing to me. Some of my earlier notions or ideals of the purposeful service of Government may have been blunted by some of the experiences of the years in Congress, but I think they will be sharpened here.

TVA prides itself in being an "antiseptic" agency as far as traditional political influences are concerned. It also has something of pride in its austerity. One of the results of this, for example, occurred on a trip from New York to Los Angeles to promote the sale of TVA bonds. Three TVA men rode tourist class, while two representatives of Lehman Brothers, hired and paid for by TVA to handle the sale, rode first class in the same plane.

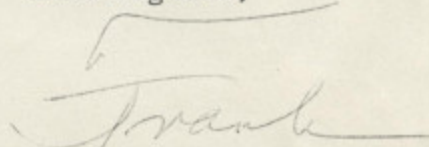
I haven't yet had time enough to properly evaluate the difference, but I feel so far a very blissful relaxation from the differences in work. In Congress (before June 5) there was always the concern about how various actions would relate to the next election, but, more than that, there was always the knowledge that every case or problem of a constituent was vitally important to that constituent. This often meant wondering whether we had done enough to help him or tried in the right way.

The problems are important here, but I don't have any more the personalized reaction to each one. So far, it seems a pleasant change.

Next year, when the world or the Congress doesn't appear to be behaving properly, I may change my mind about this. I hope I'll be able to relieve any tensions at that time by writing all sorts of advice to some of my friends up there.

This will have to do as the current evaluation of the change. I guarantee it won't become a regular newsletter.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank", written over a horizontal line.

Frank E. Smith