

in this case. I have not heard it. I think you would make an excellent chairman, one who would do the job that has to be done. But I feel you have to have the power to do the job that is expected of you and your committee. If you take all of the powers away from your committee, other than the fact that you are going to investigate violations of statutes, I think you are not accomplishing anything.

Mr. BENNETT. You may well be right.

Mr. LATTA. Because there are other means to getting at individuals—by criminal prosecution, not just through an ethics committee. If the general public thinks that this committee, as I have already indicated, has powers that it does not have, it is a reflection on the committee when it does not perform. I am certain you don't want any reflection cast on the committee. I also refer to this item in the Star on the matter of conflict of interest.

Now, from what you said, I don't know of any statutes against conflicts of interest, are there?

Mr. BENNETT. Yes, there are. The report shows some specifically relating to Members of Congress. It is a sort of piecemeal proposition. Apparently, something happened in history and they passed a law.

Mr. LATTA. Let me give you an example—

Mr. BENNETT. It is not a broad statute. There are several piecemeal statutes.

Mr. LATTA. I am an attorney, so let me take a case involving an attorney who is a member of a law firm. Let us assume that somebody goes to a member of this firm and wants to get a piece of legislation passed by the Congress and a Member of the Congress, a member of this firm, happened to be on a committee or even chairman of a committee. He has nothing to do with this, but he is a member of the firm that is being paid. This legislation comes out of the legislative committee and it is passed by the Congress. Is there any legislation on the books on such conflict of interest?

Mr. BENNETT. I don't think there is such a statute.

Mr. LATTA. You say that you would be willing to restrict this to matters involving violations of statute, is that right?

Mr. BENNETT. Yes, but you see this committee would be recommending after studying. Members of Congress would have an opportunity to be heard. We would have hearings on proposals to enact new laws of this nature. After those laws were enacted, after they were enacted, if then a Member of Congress, after the enactment of the law, violated that law, then you could go in for censure, but only after the enactment of the law. He could be brought in under a law enacted subsequently as a result of bringing it before the committee of the House, debate, and passed by the House and Senate and be signed by the President. He would have to do the act after the new law was passed.

Mr. LATTA. If your committee, though, would have some charges brought, say, by another Member, or by another constituent in the process outlined here, through an affidavit being properly signed, sent to a Member, and so forth, and he refers it, you really could not investigate that other than to investigate it for the purpose of making recommendations.

Mr. BENNETT. Well, if they left in the code of ethics for Government service, then you could, provided that was enacted before the misbehavior.