

publicized improprieties, then our system of representative government is impugned and endangered.

I personally am confident that the great majority of our legislators already observe standards of personal and professional conduct far beyond reproach but nevertheless feel that an established Select Committee such as is under consideration today is preferable to the necessity of appointing an ad hoc committee to judge charges of improper or illegal activities by any Member whenever they arise, infrequent as these charges may be. We cannot escape the fact that under the Constitution the House has the specific responsibility of judging the qualifications of any Member to sit in this body—and by the same token, I believe we have the corresponding responsibility for insisting upon the highest standards of conduct in the exercise of their official duties after they are seated. Unless we do this, we find ourselves in the position of demanding higher standards from others in government than from the people's representatives themselves—and under these circumstances, public indignation is readily understandable. In my judgment, standards of conduct for those in government should apply equally to the Executive and Legislative Branches—and the very existence of a Select Committee on Conduct and Standards would have a salutary effect on the public image of Congress. If this public image is deteriorating, as some contend, then we who serve in this body have only ourselves to blame for the lack of remedial action.

Properly constituted and administered, a Select Committee would make it clear to the American public that we in the House of Representatives do not condone unethical conduct or double standards for our membership. I am hopeful that the Committee on Rules will take prompt and favorable action on this legislation so that a Select Committee can be established during the 90th Congress.

