

ity of trying to enforce that broad code, because it is subject to too many interpretations and that is not fair to the American public and it is not fair to the Members of the Congress. What I see as one of the principal benefits to be derived by this proposed committee is to eliminate the area of doubt, to close down the area of questioning, to be as specific as possible with what it is that you want your Representative to do in the Congress by way of conduct, in action; in the removal of conflict-of-interest and campaign questions. This is a very important issue and the public on this question has to be satisfied that we are taking a strong, definite, and affirmative stand. We have to be overzealous in our efforts to insure integrity.

We are elected public officials and in a high position of trust, and therefore I feel it is incumbent upon us to act and in the course of action I have suggested with respect to a permanent committee seems to me to be the best course for this Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. Any questions?

Mr. O'NEILL. I have a question, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Neill.

Mr. O'NEILL. Mr. Fascell, with regards to conflict of interest, say, for example, a Member of Congress owned a material supply house. Say under the Bureau of Public Roads the State of X received x millions of dollars and he sold supplies to the contractor, or say that an attorney of the Congress was an expert in the field of eminent domain, and I understand there are very few real competent attorneys in that field.

If the Government was taking part of your property for a highway with Federal Government moneys, who would set up what as a conflict of law, conflict of interest, and what is not conflict of interest? Are you going to have your fellow peers on the committee set up standards of conflict of interest?

Mr. FASCELL. No.

Mr. O'NEILL. How would you handle that?

Mr. FASCELL. I didn't suggest that.

Mr. O'NEILL. I didn't say you did, but I am curious.

Mr. FASCELL. How you would resolve that question?

Mr. O'NEILL. Right.

Mr. FASCELL. I agree with you those are some of the questions that need to be answered and the only way you can do it, in my judgment, is for a committee to sit down and study the problem. It might be that you have to leave it just like it is, but at least you would put the brains of the Congress to work on that problem and a decision would be made.

Let's assume, just for the purpose of discussion, that the committee would study this problem and come out with some kind of a recommendation. It would submit it to the House. If the House approved it, it would then become a rule by which we all lived by.

Now, it's just simply a question of interpretation as to whether or not it comes within the purview of the criminal statutes under title 18 or is otherwise improper. It doesn't have a thing to do with your right to sit in the Congress, nor is there a specific rule against which or by which a judgement could be made.

Mr. O'NEILL. That is what I am getting at. Is the House going to set up its own standards of conflict of interest or is it going to leave these matters open?