

"It is the sense of the Congress that the following code of ethics should be adhered to by all Government employees, including officeholders."

Mr. Chairman, we should do better than this. It is time—and past time—for us to establish a bipartisan Committee, not only to develop language and enforcement procedures for a comprehensive, more detailed code of ethics and conduct, but also to investigate—according to regular rules—any complaints, accusations or grievances brought to the Committee's attention. My bill would set up such a Committee, with meaningful powers and sufficient safeguards, including the proviso that the Committee could look into charges against any Member, officer or employee of the House only when such charges had been made or referred to the Committee by a Member of the House.

I would hope that the Members appointed to this Committee would represent a broad range of standing committees, and would include eminent Members well informed about House salary and travel regulations, and about questions of law and constitutionality. I hope that this panel would be a vigorous one, and would recommend to the House such definite and progressive steps as requiring each Member and certain employees to file with the Committee or another appropriate office a copy of their annual Federal income tax returns and an annual statement of assets. I am prepared to recommend such an advance as soon as the Select Committee has been created and chosen.

In conclusion, I would note that being a Member of Congress has been transformed from a seasonal occupation to a full-time job—the primary assignment of all of us and the only active position held by most of us. Just as medical associations and bar associations have grievance committees, so should we police ourselves, and take all appropriate steps to guarantee the integrity of our branch of the public service. I do not fear or anticipate recklessness, self-righteousness or invasions of personal privacy by a Select Committee—but I do fear the loss of public trust which has already begun, because we have so long delayed meeting our obligations to ourselves and to the nation.

Mr. MATHIAS. As the chairman noted when these hearings began, there was a certain topical subject which may have stimulated some of the interest. Although that topic is behind us for the moment, we ought not to let the impetus die down.

It seems there are two questions here that have to be resolved. One is the confidence of the public in this institution and the other is the fair and equal treatment that should be accorded to every Member of Congress when he comes under any scrutiny. I think that is the job before us, to accomplish those two purposes.

In doing it I think we have to shake ourselves clear of the past. A lot of water has gone over the dam since Daniel Webster could put in writing in a letter to Nicholas Biddle that, "My retainer has not been renewed or refreshed as usual."

The public expects more of us than that today.

I think the nature of the congressional job has changed in the last few years. Our activities are broader. We deal in areas of mediation in the executive branch in a much broader way than our predecessors ever did. There are a lot of opportunities for exertion of influence today which I don't think the yardstick of the past is adequate to measure.

I think most of us are honest all of the time and all of us are honest most of the time, but I don't think the public knows it.

Now we made some efforts, somewhat symbolically, I think. The day after the Powell debates, I was walking through the cellar of the House Office Building and picked this up out of the ash can. That is a fact, that is where I got it.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you identify it?

Mr. MATHIAS. It is the Code of Ethics enacted by the Congress in 1958 without debate or a dissenting vote.