

with a broader resolution, would be subject to misinterpretation by the public. Perhaps the strongest reason for a Select Committee on Standards and Conduct in preference to other alternatives is that the establishment of such a select committee would clearly indicate that the House is serious about dealing with the problem of maintaining the highest standards of ethics.

Somebody said a while back that we need a symbolic gesture, and that the establishment of the House Ethics Committee would be such a symbolic gesture. I think we need more than that. I think we need a dramatic affirmative act by the House of Representatives. I might say that I think the House Ethics Committee, if established, or the subcommittee of House Administration, if that is the decision of this committee, should have authority that is prospective in nature as far as enforcement of ethics and standards is concerned. In other words, they should not look back and try to impose a new code of ethics on past performance. But I think in doing that, this committee should be very careful that it does not deprive the investigating committee of the right to investigate violations of House rules, House regulations, and the law in the past.

After all, we have just been through this process as far as Mr. Powell is concerned, and if allegations were made by someone that a sitting Member had violated the law or violated specific House rules, I think the Ethics Committee should have authority to investigate that matter and make recommendations to the House, as did the Select Committee on Mr. Powell.

I think the Ethics Committee should be formed with a very broad jurisdiction, but its authority should be to recommend action to the House. I would hope that it could enter into such fields as conflict of interest, of agency and contract influence, the writing of a detailed code of standards and conduct, employment of relatives by Members, the terms under which this would be proper, political contributions, and other matters. Where the House Ethics Committee, if that is the committee that is set up, makes recommendations that belong in the jurisdiction of another committee, I would suggest those recommendations be referred to that committee. In effect, the House Ethics Committee could be an advocate before a committee that had proper jurisdiction over matters that the Ethics Committee was recommending.

I think it is even possible over a period of time that an Ethics Committee could evolve to a stature where they could render advisory opinions for Congressmen. I do not think this would be advisable at the outset. We should test the waters and move forward gradually with reference to this question.

I think it would be helpful to many Members when there was a marginal situation with which they were faced if they could get an advisory opinion from an official unit of the House of Representatives.

I would like to make one other plea in conclusion. This last fall, as a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I went to Brazil for 2 weeks. I went with one staff member of the committee. In that 2-week period, I interviewed and talked to 121 Brazilians individually. I started at 8 o'clock in the morning and went until late at night. I had other meetings. I met with the President-elect, with cane workers, slum dwellers, educators, and so forth. It was the most educational experience I have ever had in my life. I want to say