

the House—it seems unsound to expect that same majority to have the policing responsibility over the use of this discretionary power.

Number two: A permanent ethics committee offers a clear advantage of avoiding the existing committee structure. If an existing standing committee, or sub-committee, is given the ethics responsibility for the House, then the chairman of that committee or sub-committee would be in the impossible position of having to police himself—I speak in reference, of course, to the great discretionary power which accrues to committee and sub-committee chairmen. The soundest approach would be to select for membership on a permanent ethics committee, members not presently in chairmanships elsewhere in the House. It also seems advisable to have the chairmanship of a permanent ethics committee *filled on a rotating basis* so that one man would not dominate in this position for a period of years. An ethics committee must have complete flexibility to act and, as such, I think it needs to be completely free of any relationship to the existing committee structure, which, as in the case of Mr. Powell, often gives rise to questions of abuse of power and unethical behavior.

Number three: A third advantage to a permanent ethics committee is that it gives the question of ethical conduct front rank consideration by the congress. In my judgment, no more important question comes before the House than questions relating to the ethical conduct of House members. There is tremendous public interest and concern about problems of this type. The Powell case is also instructive on this point in that the House took great pains to assign its best talent to the Powell select committee. The assignment of the most senior member of the House, Mr. Celler, who also serves as the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, is partial evidence of great care the House took in probing a question on a member's ethical conduct.

In recognition of the graveness of an ethics inquiry and its importance to the general public, I believe we need an *independent* ethics committee—concerned *just* with ethics. Not burdened by the need, as would be the case with a sub-committee, to work through a full committee. And with ethics not considered as just one of many duties and functions of a standing sub-committee, or for that matter, a full committee. This matter is too important. The matter of congressional ethics, and personal violations of these ethics, ought to be the *sole* responsibility of a *full* committee—which can devote its entire attention to this vital matter.

Number four: A fourth advantage, is that the U.S. Senate has already taken this needed step. I think we are no less a body and ought not to make the mistake of according this problem less importance than the Senate accords it. To attempt to pre-judge a House ethics committee on the basis of the record of the Senate ethics committee, makes no sense. That would be as senseless as judging one member of congress by the actions of another member. A House ethics committee will be as effective or ineffective as we make it.

Number five: A fifth advantage to the establishment of a permanent ethics committee has to do with a restoration of public confidence in the integrity of the House.

If we fail to act decisively in establishing a permanent ethics committee, I believe the public—rightly or wrongly—will view this as a whitewash, and as an effort to give the ethics question back-burner treatment. Personally, I think congress has little to hide and I think we will be a better, stronger body if the question of ethical conduct is given maximum attention and is fully exposed to the white light of open public review.

STATEMENT BY HON. WILLIAM A. STEIGER, SIXTH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

Mr. Chairman: As a freshman member of this great body, the Congress of the United States, I hesitate to question or recommend changes in the functions of this body. The subject we are examining today, however, that of ethics and conduct, transcends party lines, party traditions, and traditions of this body.

Because of the importance of this subject to our election process and our governmental process, I submit this statement in favor of establishing an Ethics Committee in the Congress.

There are two areas that I think are most significant in this matter and which I would like to discuss briefly.

The first is the matter of the public disclosure of a member's financial status. It is my feeling that such disclosure is important if we are to be able to ade-