

OUGHT TO WORK BOTH WAYS

REP. MARTIN DIES of Texas, chairman of the Special House Committee to investigate un-American activities, wants Congress to vote him \$611.32 from the Federal Treasury, this being the amount he has had to pay in court costs and lawyers' fees as the result of two libel suits filed against him.

One of these grew out of a plain mis-statement of fact by Mr. Dies, and it was dismissed after he made an abject public apology to the employe of the Board of Economic Warfare whom he had libeled. He argues that the statements for which he was sued were made by him as the chairman of a committee of Congress, and that therefore the cost of the suits shouldn't come out of his personal pocket.

The principle which Mr. Dies wants established probably would loosen the tongues of many Congressmen. If the taxpayers must defray the costs of suits resulting from irresponsible statements by committee chairman, committee members undoubtedly would claim the same privilege. They could say anything, with nothing to lose. But there might be a reasonably fair solution in the case of Mr. Dies.

He has published many articles and books and delivered many lectures; and the market for his writings and speeches was created by the fact that he is chairman of that committee. If Congress should give him the \$611.32 he's asking for, and at the same time demand that he turn into the Treasury all the money he has received for books, articles and lectures, we suspect the Government would come out well ahead on the deal. And Mr. Dies might learn a needed lesson.