

3/3/77

# Gonzalez Attacks Sprague, Quits Assassinations Panel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez submitted his resignation as chairman of the House assassinations committee yesterday in his battle with Chief Counsel Richard A. Sprague and he called Sprague an “unconscionable scoundrel.”



**GONZALEZ**

Sprague made no early comment.

The Texas Democrat submitted his resignation in a letter to Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill. The speaker said the resignation

would have to be considered by the full House, raising the prospect of a divisive floor fight.

O'Neill said he would not submit the resignation for a House verdict until he talked to Gonzalez.

Republican Conference Chairman

John B. Anderson of Illinois said, “the life of the committee still hangs by a slim tread.”

In his resignation letter, Gonzalez said “it seems clear now that the House leadership is unwilling to offer me support.

“Yet I cannot bring myself to sign pay vouchers for an unscrupulous individual, an unconscionable scoundrel, and no power on earth can compel me to do so,” Gonzalez wrote.

“Under the circumstances that now exist I have no alternative but to resign from the Select Committee on Assassinations herewith.”

The committee investigation of the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King has been embroiled in controversy since the day Congress convened in January.

The probe came to a virtual standstill Feb. 10 when Gonzalez announced he was firing Sprague for refusing to say which staff people could be fired to cut costs. All other members told Sprague to stay put on grounds any firing has to be done by the committee, not the chairman alone.