

Sad Task for Senators

Ethics Group Must Probe Charges Against Dodd

By John H. Averill
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America's Vietnam planners are not the only unhappy men in Washington these days.

Every bit as unhappy are the six Senators who suddenly inherited the melancholy task of determining whether a colleague, Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.), is guilty of misconduct.

At Dodd's request, the six Senators agreed last month to look into allegations by newspaper columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson that Dodd carried out some questionable assignments for a lobbyist and registered agent for West Germany. Dodd said he had "absolutely nothing to hide."

To determine whether he

has or hasn't is the job of the three Democrats and three Republicans who comprise the membership of a new departure in congressional introspection — the Permanent Select Committee on Standards and Conduct.

This Committee, more commonly known as the Ethics Committee, was created by a conscience-troubled Senate in July, 1964, in the wake of the scandals involving Bobby Baker, the former secretary to the Senate's Democratic Majority.

Even the creation of the new Committee was a major surprise. There are few, if any, things that politicians dislike more than involving



Sen. Stennis



Sen. Cooper

... among the unhappiest

themselves in matters of ethics or passing judgment on their peers or their staffs. But the Baker scandals made it obvious something must be done.

What the Senate had been expected to do was adopt a resolution vesting its Rules Committee, which conducted the Baker probe, with the

responsibility of investigating any alleged misconduct by Senate employees.

But Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.), furious over what he considered the cavalier refusal of the Rules Committee's Democrats to dig deeper into the Baker case, offered a substitute to create the Select Commit-

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Sen. Bennett



Sen. Monroney



Sen. McCarthy



Sen. Pearson



Sen. Dodd

"... nothing to hide"

men in Washington are these members of the Senate Ethics Committee

tee. To the surprise of almost everyone, Cooper included, his substitute was adopted by a vote of 50-33.

The six men named to the new Committee were among the most respected in the Senate. But it didn't escape unnoticed that three of them had voted against Cooper's substitute resolution. They are Sens. John

C. Stennis (D-Miss.), who was elected as Committee Chairman, Wallace F. Bennett (R-Utah), the vice chairman, and A. S. Mike Monroney (D-Okla.).

All three of them still question, as do a good many other Senators, whether any legislator can be realistically expected to pass judgment on a colleague or establish

a code of conduct that works. This same reservation is shared by a fourth Committee member, Sen. James B. Pearson (R-Kan.), who was absent the day the Senate voted on the Cooper Resolution.

All have agreed, however, to make a try at it, along with the other two Commit-

tee members—Cooper and Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy (D-Minn.).

But to the chagrin of all six, the hot potato in the form of the Dodd case fell into their laps before the new Committee really was off the ground. The Committee finds itself being forced

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Dodd Quiz Is Unhappy Senate Job

to decide a flesh-and-blood case before it has even established standards by which it can measure misconduct.

Some grave charges have been leveled against Dodd, including allegations of siphoning political campaign contributions into his private bank account. So the honor of the Senate clearly will be at stake in the conclusion and recommendations that the Stennis Committee submits when it concludes the Dodd inquiry.

The case has broad political implications. In times past, for example, Dodd was a devoted friend and disciple of Lyndon B. Johnson when the President was Senate Majority Leader.

In addition, Dodd has achieved a national reputation as an anti-Communist crusader through speeches and his role as an outspoken member of the Senate Internal Security subcommittee.

How diligently the Committee is dealing with the case is difficult to determine. For one thing, all meetings on the Dodd affair are behind closed doors and usually without being announced publicly in advance.

Furthermore, the Committee members refuse to discuss details of the case or what they have learned from examining Dodd's files or written answers he has supplied to their questions. So far, neither Dodd nor anyone else for that matter has been called to testify as a witness.

There also have been re-

ports, denied by the Committee, that the Stennis panel has shown more interest in how the information on Dodd got to columnists Pearson and Anderson than in what Dodd allegedly did. Dodd has contended that his files were ransacked by a disgruntled former employee.

The two columnists have charged that Dodd performed questionable services for retired Maj. Gen. Julius Klein, a Chicago public relations man and a registered agent for the West German government. Klein was a major target of an investigation in 1963 by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Dodd is a member, into practices by lobbyists for foreign governments.

It has been reported that the Foreign Relations Committee, following the disclosures against Dodd, discussed expelling him from the Committee. But Committee members have denied this.

Some observers speculate that the Committee would like nothing better than to find some clear-cut law violation so that it could dump the whole problem in the lap of the Justice Department.

Such outspoken champions of Senate reform as Sen. Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.) question whether the Senate is capable of policing itself.

Case contends the only workable solution to conflict-of-interest problems is a stringent law requiring all members of Congress and their employees to make public disclosures of their income, their assets and liabilities and any other financial interest they may have.

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