

Senators Wrangle Over Dodd's Case

By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

While the House investigates the high living of Rep. Adam Clayton Powell and a Federal court hears the case against former Senate aide Bobby Baker, Senators are wrangling over what to do about the embarrassing affairs of Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.).

The Wall Street law firm which represents Dodd is throwing obstacles in the way of the Senate Ethics Committee. Chief attorney, John Sonnett, has gone so far as to threaten court action to stop the Committee from investigating Dodd's finances.

This flies in the face of the Senator's original offer to cooperate fully and turn over all his files to the Committee.

The charges are far more serious than those brought against Powell or Baker. Essentially, Powell has been accused of taking private trips at public expense. Dodd not only charged some of his vacations to the taxpayers, but collected double from private groups that he arranged to address.

One of the chief charges against Baker is that he pocketed \$80,000 in campaign contributions. Dodd is accused of pocketing an estimated \$50,000 from the funds raised for his political campaigns.

Unlike Powell, Dodd has not been barred from his seat

pending the outcome of the investigation.

Dodd's attorneys contend that the Ethics Committee doesn't have jurisdiction to investigate campaign expenditures.

"Jurisdiction to investigate campaign expenditures for many years has been and still is with the Senate Rules Committee," Sonnett wrote to the Committee.

He also pleaded that the Senate investigation might jeopardize Dodd's defense against tax-evasion charges.

"I would be deeply concerned," wrote Sonnett, "that the examining revenue agent might be prejudiced by anything the Committee might say or do."

However, the Senate debate which led to the formation of the Ethics Committee made it clear the Committee would have authority to investigate any misconduct.

Sen. Clifford Case (R-N.J.) put the question to Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.), who sponsored the motion to establish an Ethics Committee.

"The Committee would be free to investigate anything which, in its judgment, seemed worthy, deserving and requiring investigation from any source?" asked Case.

"That is correct," replied Cooper. His motion was approved by the Senate.

Meanwhile, reports have been buzzing around the Senate cloakroom that Dodd's friends are passing the hat to pay his legal expenses.

He is represented by Cahill, Gordon, Reindel & Ohl—which specializes in handling corporate work. When Dodd was asked on a TV program how he was paying for this high-priced legal talent, he replied:

"I wanted to make the point that John Sonnett is doing this, as he presented it to me, as a public service. I couldn't afford to hire a firm such as this."

Though Dodd deserves a good defense, his case seems a curious cause for a great Wall Street firm.

A possible clue to the firm's solicitude for the Senator can be found in the records of the Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee which Dodd heads.

During the early 1960s, the subcommittee staff produced documentary evidence that the networks were deliberately injecting sex and violence into TV programs to boost their ratings.

Psychiatrists testified that violence on television was having a "dangerous" effect on children.

This column praised Dodd for going ahead with the investigation. But after an encouraging start, the investigation seemed to die out. It failed to bring reforms that are needed in TV programming, and today sex and crime are as rampant as ever on television.

The secret subcommittee records show that the staff had prepared a damaging case

against the TV networks, particularly NBC. To defend NBC, the late John Thomas Cahill personally appeared before Dodd. He was senior partner in the firm that is now representing Dodd. He also happened to be a director of the NBC Radio-TV network and its parent company, Radio Corporation of America.

Normally, NBC's general counsel, Thomas Ervin, would have handled the network's defense. But he was nudged aside to make way for the Wall Street firm.

As it turned out, the firm had reason to be satisfied with the outcome. Dodd obligingly agreed to hear embarrassing testimony in closed session. Later, he suppressed the most damaging evidence against NBC.

He also rejected the recommendation of chief counsel Paul L. Lasking that NBC should be cited for contempt for failing to comply with a subpoena.

Now the firm that pleaded NBC's case before Dodd is handling Dodd's case before the Senate Ethics Committee. After Dodd declared on television that the firm was working for him free of charge, the firm submitted a bill which Dodd's friends are now scrambling to pay.

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Drew Pearson will predict the effect of the Adam Clayton Powell case on the Sen. Dodd investigation at 6:40 p.m. today over Radio WTOP.