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5-Month Inquiry Foreseen In Leaking of Rice Report

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WASHINGTON, March 4— Representative John J. Flynt, chairman of the House Ethics Committee, said today that his committee's investigation of the leaking of the Pike report could take five months and might branch out into the reported loss of 232 secret documents that the Central Intelligence Agency had lent to the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. Flynt insisted that his panel's investigation was not directed against "any one man or group of persons," but was intended to find out "what happened to one or more copies of the preliminary draft of the report" of the Select Committee on Intelligence, headed by Representative Otis G. Pike, Democrat of Suffolk County.

"I don't know and I don't think that any of the 12 members of the committee know what direction the inquiry will take," the Georgia Democrat said in an interview.

But he emphasized that it would be "neither an inquisition nor a witch hunt."

The direction of the investigation may have taken a new turn today with the announcement by the C.I.A. that 232 documents, about 100 of them dealing with sensitive budget matters that the agency had lent the Pike committee, had not been returned.

The C.I.A. wrote Mr. Pike requesting that he look into the matter.

Some Top Secret Papers

A C.I.A. spokesman said the missing documents included:

One hundred and three dealing with top secret audits of the agency budget.

Twenty-eight top secret papers bearing on the coup in Portugal.

Thirteen top secret papers relating to the strategic arms limitation talks between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Fifteen top secret papers having to do with agency procurement.

Thirty-five classified secret papers that related to C.I.A. personnel at work in other agencies of the Government.

Eight other secret papers.

M. Pike said in an interview that it was his "guess" that the classified documents were "either in boxes at the C.I.A. or at the National Archives" to which some of the committee records had been sent. He added that others had been burned.

He said that he had asked the C.I.A. for a "bill of particulars" on exactly what the agency considered to be missing to see if they were still in the committee files.

Asked if he believed the ethics committee would investigate the incident, Mr. Pike answered: "I'm not going to speculate."

House Vote Scheduled

But the ranking Republican on the Pike committee, Representative Robert McClory of Illinois, said he believed the ethics committee should investigate "the 200 missing documents as well as The Village Voice." The latter was a reference to the New York weekly newspaper, which published substantial parts of the Pike report after the House had voted to keep it secret.

Asked about widening the ethics committee investigation to the C.I.A. documents, Mr. Flynt said, "I don't know that it is covered in our charter, but I would assume that it is."

Last month the House ordered the ethics committee to investigate the leaking of the Pike committee report to The Village Voice. Daniel Schorr, a CBS news correspondent here, has admitted furnishing

a copy of the Pike report to the newspaper.

Since the House voted on Feb. 19 to have the ethics committee investigate, the panel requested \$350,000 to carry out the inquiry. The House is scheduled to vote on this request next week.

Mr. Flynt said today that the committee had dropped plans to borrow agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, though the director of the investigation will be a recently retired F.B.I. inspector, and will hire 10 investigators from outside the bureau.

Some representatives had expressed doubt that the committee should use investigators from the executive branch to inquire into Congressional problems. Mr. Flynt said the committee was now seeking to hire either lawyers, or accountants or reporters as investigators. The committee also intends to hire three attorneys to handle the legal work.

In drawing up a budget of \$350,000, which already has run into opposition because of its size, Mr. Flynt said the committee had calculated on the assumption that the investigators might be needed through July 31.

But during a two-hour interview, Mr. Flynt and the other members present, Representatives Thomas S. Foley, Democrat of Washington, and Edward Hutchinson, Republican of Michigan, emphasized that no one could say how long the investigation might go on.

Mr. Foley said that he hoped that it would not continue "into the next Congress."

About \$165,000 of the funding request is intended to be used for office supplies, communications and travel expenses for witnesses and investigators, indicating that the scope of the inquiry is going to go beyond Washington.

Mr. Flynt noted that he had named David Bowers, a recently retired F.B.I. inspector, as director of the investigation.

"I'm going to tell him what I want done and I want him to do it," Mr. Flynt said, adding that "we want the facts by the more appropriate method of investigation."