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No Action Seen Against Fortas

By JACK BELL

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congress appears unlikely to take any action against Justice Abe Fortas—and certainly won't impeach him—for receiving a fee from the family of financier Louis E. Wolfson after being a member of the Supreme Court.

A flurry of proposals for a Senate Judiciary Committee inquiry into Fortas' receipt of the fee brought the reply from Chairman James O. Eastland,

D-Miss., that there are no plans for an investigation at this time.

"I am not sure we have jurisdiction," Eastland said. "Under the Constitution it seems to me that jurisdiction lies with the House."

THIS REFERENCE to the House's power to bring impeachment proceedings requiring trial before the Senate, found Rep. Emanuel Celler, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, in no mood to institute such action.

"I have no intention of starting any impeachment proceedings," he said in a separate interview.

The Fortas matter was "discussed in passing" at President Nixon's weekly conference today with Republican leaders of Congress, said House GOP Leader Gerald R. Ford.

FORD TOLD NEWSMEN he believes "the argument is persu-

asive under these circumstances" that financial disclosure requirements now imposed on members of the legislative and executive branches should be extended to the judiciary.

Ford said the charges against Fortas "are very serious, including the 11-month lag in returning the fee."

He suggested Congress might want to look into distribution of funds by certain foundations.

Life magazine reported in its current issue that Fortas accepted \$20,000 from Wolfson's

works to better race relations. His statement made no mention of the amount of money involved nor when he returned it.

When Wolfson's appeal reached the high court, Fortas abstained from taking part in the deliberations. The court refused to hear the appeal.

An influential Democrat, who did not want to be quoted by name, said there is little likelihood of even a Congressional reprimand for Fortas.

"He was indiscreet, but he didn't do anything illegal," this Democrat said.

Republicans who led the chorus of Senate criticism against the justice concede privately there is not much that could be done.

WARREN DENIES PROBE

WASHINGTON (AP)—Spokesmen in the offices of Chief Justice Earl Warren and Associate Justice Abe Fortas said today they were "unaware" of any Supreme Court inquiry into Fortas' relations with the Louis Wolfson family foundation. "I know absolutely nothing about it," was the reaction in Warren's office to reports that the court is looking into Fortas' consideration and eventual rejection of a fee from the foundation in 1966.

family foundation in January 1966, just three months after the justice was seated on the court.

THE LIFE account said Fortas did not return the money until 11 months after Wolfson and an associate had been indicted for violating federal securities laws.

The article also said "whatever services he may or may not have rendered to the foundation, Justice Fortas' name was being dropped in strategic places by Wolfson and his business associate, Elkin Gerbert, in their effort to stay out of prison."

Fortas flatly denied he accepted any money or that he tried to do anything on Wolfson's behalf. He confirmed, however, that a fee had been tendered by the foundation for research and writing and that he returned the money after deciding he could not accept the assignment.

FORTAS, WHOSE old law firm represented some Wolfson interests, said the foundation