

Fortas's Congress Critics Hint at Further Steps

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WASHINGTON, May 7—Congressional critics of Justice Abe Fortas appeared to be biding their time today, although they expressed confidence that the controversy would continue unless he came forward soon with a fuller explanation of his receipt of a fee from the family foundation of Louis E. Wolfson.

Senator Robert P. Griffin said "there is more information" that has not yet come out about Justice Fortas, but he added that he was not at liberty to disclose the nature or the source of such information.

But the Michigan Republican, who led the Senate Republicans who blocked the confirmation of Justice Fortas as Chief Justice last summer, added that "there is a possibility that he [Fortas] would resign" rather than explain the incident to a Congressional committee.

Impeachment Move Hinted

He made the statements at a joint news conference with Representatives Robert Taft Jr., Ohio Republican, during which both men suggested repeatedly that further steps would be taken unless Justice Fortas gave a satisfactory account of the affair within the next few days.

"I can conceive very seriously of an impeachment proceeding being brought" if Justice

Fortas does not speak up, Mr. Taft said.

He noted that the Constitution says that Federal judges shall hold their offices "during good behavior." Some experts believe that a Justice can be impeached for "bad behavior," and some believe that "high crimes and misdemeanors" must be proved, he said.

Mr. Griffin and Mr. Taft said that they were jointly sponsoring a bill that would require all Federal judges to disclose outside financial income and to make their tax records available to Congress under certain circumstances.

Most Congressmen appeared to be adopting a wait-and-see attitude.

Justice Fortas was said by a Supreme Court spokesman to have spent the day working in his chambers. He gave no indication that he would either resign or volunteer more information about the \$20,000 fee that Life magazine said he had received from the Wolfson foundation and then returned after 11 months.

Wolfson, a Florida multimillionaire, was subsequently convicted on Federal charges of selling unregistered securities and was imprisoned on April 25.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, confirmed today that President

Nixon refused last month to meet with a small Congressional delegation that sought an appointment with him to discuss Wolfson's case before he went to prison.

Senator Spessard L. Holland, Florida Democrat, had requested the appointment. The group was to have included Representatives Charles E. Bennett and Claude Pepper, both Florida Democrats.

Spokesmen in Senator Holland's office have disclosed that Attorney General John N. Mitchell telephoned Senator Holland more than two weeks ago to explain why Mr. Nixon had refused to meet with them on the Wolfson matter.

Mr. Mitchell reportedly said that something would come to light soon in connection with Wolfson that would explain the President's action.

Last Monday Life magazine published its article on the Wolfson fee paid to Justice Fortas.

Grand Jury Meets

CLEVELAND, May 7 (UPI)—A Federal Grand Jury began today an investigation into the allegations that the former law firm of Mr. Fortas had withheld subpoenaed documents in a price-fixing case.

Justice Department attorneys appeared before the regular session of the United States

District Court grand jury to present details of a lengthy investigation into action taken in 1967 by the law firm of Arnold & Porter.

United States Attorney Bernard J. Stuplinski confirmed only that the jury was meeting here in its usual secret session, and that Justice Department attorneys were in town.

Arnold & Porter initially represented Donovan Steel and Wire Company, one of several steel companies involved in a price-fixing case tried in Toledo, Ohio, in 1967.