

Let us learn from the past and not repeat these same mistakes to the detriment of our future generations.

APPOINTMENT OF OUTSIDE COUNSEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, at the end of last week, the makeup of the Ethics Committee was announced by the Speaker and by the minority leader. We know as Members of this House that that is among the most difficult task Members can be called upon to perform, and, that is, to sit in those rare occasions when they must in judgment of their colleagues in this House for actions or allegations of behavior. The difficulty of that task was recognized by Speaker GINGRICH back in 1988 when the conduct and questions of the former Speaker was called into question, and he said that the Speaker of the House, a position which is in third line for succession to the presidency and the second most powerfully elected position in America, this investigation has to meet a higher standard of public accountability and integrity.

I think he is probably correct. It certainly must meet the same standards as for Members of the House, but clearly sitting in judgment of the Speaker is a far more difficult task than sitting in judgment upon regular Members of the House because of his position of power and prestige and his integral being to the workings of this House and to the success of Members of his own party and of the House generally.

It is for that reason that while we applaud finally that there is an Ethics Committee in place, that we must raise the issue of the appointment of an outside counsel. Serious allegations have been made against the Speaker in his dealings with the potential publication of his book, the funding of his college class, the solicitation and the disbursement of fundings for GOPAC, a PAC which he controls and which many Members of the House have benefited from or been involved in over the last year. It now turns out that three of the Members, or two, maybe three of the Members on the Republican side of the Ethics Committee have had dealings with GOPAC and been involved in one fashion or another with that.

I think again unfortunately in this House we do not get to deal with simply the facts. We must also deal with the appearance when we do the public's business. And the appearances of a conflict within the Ethics Committee must be dealt with and they must be dealt with in a timely fashion and they must be dealt with immediately.

As the Wall Street Journal pointed out in its discussion of the makeup of the Ethics Committee and about the potential conflict of the members of

that committee, it went on to quote Senator DOLE, the Republican leader in the Senate, who said on "Face the Nation" that "the American people want us to move forward. We are not doing that. All the focus is on NEWT GINGRICH."

I think that is quite clearly the mood in this body and the mood in the public and that is that we must move forward with the agenda, whether it is the contract as represented by the Republican Members of the House or the plight and the well-being of the American working family as represented by Democratic Members of the House, we must go forward with that agenda. We will not be able to do that until this issue is resolved, and this issue must be resolved in favor of the House of Representatives as an institution and must be resolved in favor of the confidence of the American people in this House and it must be resolved in a fair, full disclosure of these allegations and a fair and full investigation. That cannot be done when we have members of the Ethics Committee who have been involved with the organization called into question.

This should be done sooner rather than later and it must be done by resorting to an outside counsel as Speaker GINGRICH recognized when he was embroiled in a conflict with the previous Speaker of the House. It simply requires the appointment of an outside counsel so we can remove it from the floor of the Congress, we can remove it from our daily workings. We have already seen where Speaker GINGRICH has suggested that this would be tied up in the issue of Mexico, that somehow the issue of the bailout or the loan guarantees to Mexico could not be properly considered if this issue continued to be raised.

This issue must continue to be raised until it is settled. And the way you can keep it from being raised on the floor of the Congress is to have it put into the hands of an independent and outside counsel to remove it from this institution.

This issue was raised in the telecommunications policy where we see the Speaker as a beneficiary of the contract with a company owned by Rupert Murdoch, has now met with Mr. Murdoch, with his lobbyist about telecommunications policy, then engaged in a private meeting for Republicans only on telecommunications policy, and then threatened to tell the owners of these companies that they ought to get their reporters in line. So this conflict is spilling over onto the floor of the Congress, onto public policy. It must be separated. The only way it can be separated is with the timely and immediate appointment of an independent and outside counsel in the matter of the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] versus the questions of his operation and GOPAC and in the funding of his college class and his book contract.

A CALL FOR OPENNESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, I returned to my district in Springfield, IL this weekend as I do virtually every weekend, and it was interesting that some of my friends when I came across them at a party on Saturday night said, "What in the world was going on in the House of Representatives last week? We tuned into the news and we saw grown men and women shouting, red in the face, emotional. What was it all about?"

What it was all about was a 1-minute speech, like those given every day, by the gentlewoman from Florida, CARRIE MEEK, in which she raised the question of the Speaker's book contract. It led to a ruling by the Chair concerning which words were appropriate to be spoken on the floor and a reaction from my Democratic side of the aisle where there was a feeling that perhaps this ruling, which relied on a precedent almost a century old, had perhaps gone too far.

People in the ordinary course of life with their families may find it hard to imagine why grown men and women would get so exercised and so emotional over something which appears as inconsequential as what words can be spoken on the floor of this House. But frankly, ladies and gentlemen, I think when we take an oath of office to uphold the Constitution, including therein our freedom of speech, that this House probably as much if not more than any other place in the United States should be the situs where free speech is respected. As a result, our emotions ran high, on the Republican side in defense of their Speaker, on the Democratic side in defense of the concept of free speech.

I did not come to make this comment this morning on the issue of free speech, but merely to let you know as previous speakers have how much time has been focused in the last weeks on this floor of the House of Representatives on Speaker GINGRICH's financial dealings. I would like to make a suggestion this afternoon as to how we can really start focusing instead on some of the critical issues facing this country and move away from that.

Last week, of course, we were embroiled for an entire day on the question of what could be said on the floor of the House about the Speaker's multimillion-dollar book deal. Then in sequence every nightly news Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, all of the major networks were consumed with variations on that theme:

Did in fact the Speaker meet with the lobbyist to discuss policies relative to telecommunications? The same lobbyist for the same magnate, Mr. Murdoch, who owns the publishing company the Speaker is doing business

with, did in fact Mr. Murdoch come to the Capitol and so forth.

In fact by Friday of last week, the Republican chairman of the House Banking Committee sent a letter to the administration and said that he was not prepared to consider the Mexican financial crisis as long as Mr. GRINGRICH's ethical problems were being discussed on the floor. He did not think that was a political environment that he could in good conscience discuss the Mexican financial crisis in.

I think that is unfortunate and it suggests how much business on Capitol Hill is now being subsumed into the Speaker's financial situation.

We have seen reaction across the country. In the Midwest, my hometown of Springfield and in Chicago, major newspapers have editorialized that the Speaker has to get away from this book deal and get back to focusing on issues important to America. Virtually every editorial writer with the politically predictable exception of Rush Limbaugh has said it is time for the Speaker to do something about this and get it behind him. It went to far this morning as to have an article in the Wall Street Journal questioning the members of the House Ethics Committee on the Republican side.

Let me say at the outset that I know all three of the gentlemen referred to in the article and I have absolutely the highest confidence in their honesty and integrity. I would gladly have them sit in judgment of myself should a question ever be presented. But in this situation, where they have been involved with GOPAC, the Speaker's political action committee, there is a legitimate question about conflict of interest.

□ 1310

I think it goes to the point raised by the gentleman from California. It is time for us to take this whole swirl of controversy about GOPAC, the Speaker's foundations, the book deal and such, and take it off of the floor of this House, off of Capitol Hill and put it in the hands of an outside counsel, someone who is chosen on a bipartisan basis to look into the facts and report to this body as well as to the American people.

We can then step aside from this and get down to the real business that is before us. It is certainly important that we be concerned about the ethics and integrity of the House of Representatives. I think the outside counsel is the best way to go. It will not be a Republican or Democratic choice, it will be a bipartisan choice. It has been done before and it should be done in this instance. We can put this behind us. We can stop focusing on it and move forward on important issues which we will continue.

This week we are considering unfunded mandate legislation and tomorrow night, right here at this podium, the President of the United States will have the opportunity, as others have before him, to speak to the American people. Then we will go on to consider a balanced budget amendment. These

are all critically important issues for the Nation.

In order that we give our full attention, as we should, to them, an outside counsel should be called immediately to take this ethics question involving the Speaker off of our agenda and put it in the hands of a nonpartisan source that can make a decision as to whether or not anything has happened.

AID TO MEXICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMP). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. DEFAZIO] is recognized during morning business for 2 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Wall Street, the influential lobbyists in Washington, DC, and Republicans in Congress prattle on about free markets and free trade until it is their speculative investments and profits on the line. If NAFTA were really about free trade, and free markets, then it would mean a free fall for both the Mexican tax market and a free fall for the peso.

Heaven forbid that we should let the free market work when Wall Street's major financiers, Mexico's 24 billionaires, multinational corporations, big brokerage houses, and international investment bankers have gambled and lost.

Fred Bergsten, director, Institute for International Economics, says of Members of Congress such as myself who oppose the bailout Mexico, "They don't realize they could cause what might be like an accidental nuclear war."

Out of such outrageous hyperbole is born the idea that the bailout of Mexico's billionaires and international speculators is an issue of national security which requires the United States to put its full faith and credit, that is read exactly, more specifically, United States taxpayers at risk.

In the spirit of openness and sunshine, demanded by the new Republican majority in Congress and adopted in their rules, let us have some hearings on this issue. Let us have hearings before the Republican leaders jam the Mexican bailout through in the dark of the night, without any deliberation by this House.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

(Whereupon, at 1 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m., the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.)

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We pray, O almighty God, that we will be faithful to that which marks our purpose and reason for living, that we will be steadfast in our allegiances and in our vision, that we will be worthy of the high calling that is ours. Yet, O gracious God, may we not only be devoted to our mission, but may we also listen to others, to hear their voices, to sense their purpose, to discern their motivations so that together we will testify to the good purposes of our Nation and bear witness to our unity as Your people. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD] will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LAHOOD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS— STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 16) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 16

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That the two Houses of Congress assembled in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, September 24, 1995, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

READING THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, our Contract With America states on the first day of Congress, a Republican House will force Congress to live under the same laws as everyone else, cut one-third of committee staffs, cut the congressional budget. Mr. Speaker, we have done that.