

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