

FROM THE OFFICES OF:

Rep. Robert F. Ellsworth (R. of Kans.)
439 House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

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Washington 25, D. C.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOP CONGRESSMEN HIT "40 DAYS OF COVERUP" IN ESTES CASE

The House of Representatives was told today that it must take "a part of the blame for the 40 days of coverup" in the Billie Sol Estes case because of its failure to launch a thorough investigation of the matter.

Reps. Robert F. Ellsworth (R. of Kans.) and Garner E. Shriver (R. of Kans.), participating in "Project Uncover," a series of House speeches on the Estes case, charged that the Administration has "tried to keep the lid on this mess" since Estes' arrest on March 28th.

The Kansan noted that President Kennedy had stated on October 19, 1960, that "an official in the government of the United States must have one allegiance, and one allegiance only--a complete dedication to the interests of our National Government."

"Just the shipment of grain from Kansas to Estes' storage facilities in Texas has cost the taxpayers a fortune," Representative Ellsworth said. "This very fact alone makes a shambles of Secretary Freeman's statement that the Estes scandal had not cost the taxpayers one cent."

Citing the Agriculture Secretary's appointment of Estes to the National Cotton Advisory Council after Estes had been fined \$48,000 for violating Agriculture Department regulations, and Freeman's "attempts to coverup a much greater scandal than the mink coats and deep freezers of the Truman era," Ellsworth charged that "the Secretary's alibi that Estes had not cost the government any money" is the final straw. "Freeman," he declared, "should be fired out of hand."

The Kansas Republican reiterated the demand made by other GOP members of "Project Uncover" that the House Agriculture Committee instigate a "complete investigation of this scandal" and he introduced a resolution to that effect. He completed his remarks by saying that developments in this case to date make obvious at least three facts:

"1) That the President, instead of sending telegrams praising the Secretary should fire him outright; 2) That the loss of public confidence in the Department of Agriculture demands a sweeping investigation of the Estes case by this body, and 3) That the Administration, up to this point, has given the impression that it will exert every effort to keep the truth in the Estes matter from the American people and this impression should be dispelled."

Rep. Shriver, who also introduced a resolution empowering the House Agriculture Committee to make a full scale investigation of the Estes case called for a "relentless but fair and impartial investigation."

Shriver said that he was disturbed by Secretary Freeman's failure to direct immediate actions against Estes and Department officials until "the spotlight of publicity" had been focused upon the financier's activities by Texas authorities.

(over)

"I concur fully with this statement made by the President," Shriver said, "and I hope that the Congress will fulfill its responsibility in ferretting out all of the facts in this case. We must be assured of the integrity of all public servants -- including Members of Congress -- if we are to retain the confidence of the American people."

Kansas has felt the impact of Estes' influence upon agriculture officials in Washington, Shriver said. There is evidence that Kansas grain storage interests last year lost 5 million bushels of grain. Texas Attorney General Will Wilson has discovered receipts for Kansas grain in Estes' files, Shriver noted.

Shriver concluded by saying, "As a final thought Mr. Speaker, I note that over 5 million bushels of wheat were moved from Kansas, Missouri, Colorado and Nebraska to Billie Sol Estes in Texas last year. It might be well for the Colorado Congressional delegation to introduce a resolution, which I would support, prohibiting the moving to Texas of that beautiful and spacious Rocky Mountain National Park -- which is also known as Estes Park."

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