

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FROM THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
244 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas) said today that Attorney General Will Wilson of Texas, a Democrat, who spearheaded the state investigation of the collapsed Billie Sol Estes business-agriculture empire, would welcome an opportunity to appear before the House Agriculture Committee or the Subcommittee on Departmental Oversight and Consumer Relations to present what information he has on this case.

Dole, a member of both Committees, said he had talked by telephone with Mr. Wilson at his office in Austin, Texas, today. The Kansas Congressman said he is advising Chairman Harold Cooley and Subcommittee Chairman Paul Jones of Wilson's offer to meet with either or both groups.

"During our conversation," Dole said, "Mr. Wilson emphasized that he had been handicapped in the conduct of the Texas investigation by the fact that he lacked the power to subpoena witnesses and records from out of state. He pointed out, for example, that Mr. Emery Jacobs, who resigned as Deputy Director of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service during the Estes investigation, had been invited to come to Texas to testify but had never put in an appearance."

There was testimony during the Texas hearings that Jacobs and other U.S. Department of Agriculture Employees had accepted expensive gifts from Estes.

"After talking with Attorney General Wilson," Dole said, "I am more convinced than ever that only a Congressional investigation will clear the air. Congress has the power to subpoena the records and the witnesses required to prove or disprove the many charges and accusations which have been raised in the Texas hearings and in numerous newspaper reports dealing with the Estes case.

"What disturbs me is that up to now virtually all of the disclosures of alleged improprieties by USDA officials have come not from the Department itself but from state courts of Inquiry and from enterprising reporters. The evidence seems to be overwhelming that top USDA officials have been aware of some facets of the Estes case for many months,

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especially the matter involving the illegal transfer of cotton allotments to Estes. The Department clearly should not be entrusted with the job of investigating itself. That job belongs in the hands of Congress which provides the funds for USDA's activities and writes the legislation under which it operates.

"I call again for immediate action on my resolution (House Resolution 600) for an investigation of the entire matter by the House Agriculture Committee or the Subcommittee on Legislative Oversight.

"Two weeks ago I wrote to Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, asking specifically whether his agency had any further information on Estes' relationships with USDA employees which had not yet been made public. I asked Mr. Freeman if it were true, as reported in the press, that Estes was appointed to the Department's Cotton Advisory Council over the objections of USDA's personnel section and was permitted to remain as a member until after his indictment in Texas on fraud charges. I also asked if legislation is required to prevent such transfers of cotton allotments as were undertaken by Estes.

"To date, I have received no reply from Mr. Freeman.

"I have also written Attorney General Robert Kennedy, inquiring as to whether the FBI investigation of the case covered charges of favoritism to Estes, even though there might be no evidence of bribery or other violations of U.S. law. I have not heard from Mr. Kennedy either.

"Only a prompt investigation by Congress can remove the cloud of suspicion which has been raised over USDA."