

# NEWS RELEASE

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BOB WILSON  
Chairman

PAUL A. THEIS  
Public Relations Director

Lincoln 4-3010

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## REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMEN LAUNCH "PROJECT UNCOVER"

Reps. Robert Dole (R. of Kans.) and John B. Anderson (R. of Ill.) today launched the first in a series of House speeches calling for the resignation of Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman and a "through investigation" of the Billie Sol Estes case by the Departmental Oversight Sub-committee of the House Agriculture Committee.

In his opening remarks, Representative Dole, who heads "Project Uncover" said: "The Estes case has already proven to be a matter that requires the most painstaking examination. The integrity of the Department of Agriculture has been seriously impugned by disclosures thus far. We cannot allow a cabinet-rank department to remain under a cloud. Far too many Americans are subject to the whims and caprices of this department to permit any doubts about the basic honesty of its officials to linger in the minds of our citizens."

Commenting on Agriculture Secretary Freeman's statement over the week-end that he would discharge any Department official whose actions were of doubtful nature, Dole said: "Perhaps the Secretary should start with himself. It is perfectly obvious that the Secretary has attempted to cover-up the Estes mess. Moreover, his own action in appointing Estes to the National Cotton Advisory Board after Estes had been fined for violations of the Department's own regulations was certainly a doubtful one."

Representative Anderson warned the House that it "cannot avoid its responsibilities to investigate this matter by letting the other body do it." "This is an independent body with its own responsibilities," he said, "and they can be best discharged by the appropriate committee--in this case the Departmental Oversight Sub-committee of the Agriculture Committee. I am somewhat surprised that my colleagues across the aisle have not been quick to accept this fact. During the previous Administration, they certainly did not drag their feet when any matter that seemed to require investigation by the House arose."

"Project Uncover" will continue with several speeches each day, Representative Dole said, "until the House accepts its responsibilities in the Estes case."

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