

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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From the Office of Congressman Bob Dole
244 House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

The right of the public to know the facts was poorly served by the Administration officials who briefed President Kennedy for his comments on the Estes case.

The President said the Estes matter came to public attention when the U. S. Government indicted him on April 5. This may have been the date when it came to the attention of Attorney General Robert Kennedy and the Department of Justice. Certain aspects of the Estes manipulations were well known to the Department of Agriculture many months earlier.

It was a small, twice a week newspaper in Pecos, Texas, the home town of Billie Sol Estes which first broke the scandal in a series of articles commencing on February 12 of this year.

This newspaper exposed the fact that Estes was dealing heavily in Chattel Mortgages on vast numbers of anhydrous ammonia fertilizer storage tanks which did not appear to exist.

Acting on this tip-off, the finance companies which had advanced millions of dollars to Estes in connection with this fertilizer operation began to check into his operation. What they found lead them to blow the whistle and it was only then that the Department of Justice got into the act.

The Department of Agriculture was still sitting on a mass of evidence showing that the Estes pooled cotton allotment operations were illegal, but USDA was saying nothing.

The truth is that USDA had as much evidence in November of 1961 to justify a \$500,000 penalty as it had when it finally invoked that fine against Estes only a few days ago.

It was the state courts of Texas and the press which smoked out Estes' relationships with certain USDA employees while Secretary of Agriculture Freeman stood silently by. For a 35-day period, while the Estes scandal was on page one of virtually every newspaper in the country, Mr. Freeman _____ to call a press conference.