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Douglas, Paul, concerning creation of commission to improve  
ethics in federal government, 1951.



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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE

May 31, 1951

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
19810 Shaker Boulevard  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

As you may know, Senator Fulbright has introduced a resolution for the creation of a commission designed to improve the standards of ethics in the Federal Government. This resolution has been referred to a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, and I have been asked to serve as chairman.

We plan to start our hearings on or about June 11, continuing them for approximately three weeks. We hope that out of these hearings will come a greater awareness of the ethical problems of government, and also some agreement regarding the standards of propriety and conduct to be observed by administrators, legislators and citizens in their dealings with the government.

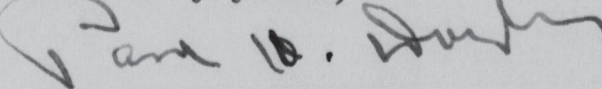
It is not the subcommittee's purpose to use these hearings as a springboard to castigate or expose individuals or organizations. Our only desire is to help the development of social ethics at one of its growing points.

I am enclosing a partial list of persons whom we are planning to invite to testify, together with copies of (1) Senator Fulbright's speech on the subject in the Senate, (2) the Fulbright resolution, and (3) an article which I wrote for the New York Times.

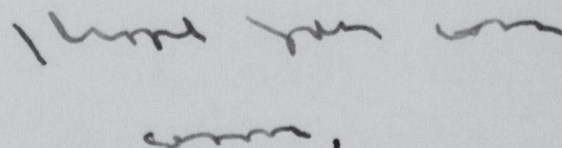
It is anticipated that some of the hearings may be televised, but it will be possible to schedule your appearance with or without this medium, whichever you prefer.

It is our sincere hope that you will be able to assist us in the examination of this proposed legislation and that we may have a favorable reply as to the possible date of your appearance.

Faithfully yours,



Paul H. Douglas





June 5, 1951

Senator Paul H. Douglas  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

Permit me to thank you for your kind letter of May 31st and for the enclosures. I am deeply interested in the resolution which has been introduced by Senator Fulbright for the creation of a commission on ethics in the Federal Government. I believe that the establishment of such a commission is highly desirable and may be productive of positive good. Were I free, I should be most eager to appear before your committee on Labor and Public Welfare at its hearings. Unfortunately, I am preparing to leave for South Africa in the next few days and it will not be possible for me to come to Washington.

Please be assured of my readiness to be of service to you in this matter as in any other matter. I plan to return to the States by the end of August.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er



## WE NEED A NEW CODE FOR WASHINGTON

Senator Douglas proposes three rules to raise  
the standards of conduct in public affairs

By Paul H. Douglas

Over the centuries we have worked out standards of propriety which judges are supposed to follow in deciding cases that are brought before them. The parties to a case are not supposed to discuss it with the judge outside of the court room, and he should resolutely refuse to accept any favor from an actual or potential litigant. The final decision is based solely on evidence produced in the courtroom or submitted in written briefs. Neither legislators, the press nor private citizens should try to influence the judgment before it is given.

While these standards are sometimes more honored in the breach than in the observance, it is well that we should have them. For they do insure a far greater degree of justice than would be the case were judges to jostle and be jostled in the hurly-burly of life. It has, however, been largely possible to achieve this degree of insulation because the volume of court cases is fortunately small in relation to the population, because there is full publicity and argument of opposing counsel in the courtroom and because the decisions of the court must be stated and justified in writing and, except those of the highest court, are subject to appeal.

No such standards have been worked out or applied in the case of administrative officials whose decisions, with the growth of government, now vitally affect, both individually and collectively, the lives of tens of millions. Consider, for a moment, the ways in which the decisions of government officials can make or break the lives of Americans--the men in our armed forces, the millions more who will be on the selective service rolls, the veterans receiving compensation, the thousands in Federal prisons, the people and 400,000 corporations who pay income taxes, the utilities whose rates are fixed by government commissions, the air lines and the broadcasting companies whose range of activity is controlled, the families that receive Federal-state assistance payments, the individuals who receive old-age insurance and farm benefits.

All this is only a partial listing of the persons affected by controls which the Government exercises. And in the semi-war economy which Russian aggression has forced us to establish, complex new controls have been set up.

I believe that it has been necessary for Government to assume most of the functions it exercises, in order to carry out the general purposes outlined in the preamble to the Constitution; namely, to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense (and) promote the general welfare." But it is obvious that almost frightening power has been placed in the hands of the officials who make the key decisions both by promulgating the general rules of administrative law and by passing upon the individual cases of application and enforcement.



If these men perform their duties with intelligence, energy, complete integrity, a devotion to the common good, mixed with a sympathetic understanding for the plight of individuals caught in the web of government rules and regulations, the country is greatly benefited. But if the administration falls into the hands of corrupt, lazy, ignorant or haughty men, the instrumentalities of government can become weapons of oppression and destroyers of human liberty.

Now I believe that on the whole the present level of administration in the national Government is fairly high. The main run of government officials show a good deal of public spirit, are reasonably intelligent and energetic and have fairly high standards of integrity. They compare favorably with officials in private business. A few are selfless saints; some, I regret to say, are probably corrupt. Taking human nature as it is, most officials are likely to be somewhat influenced by their prejudices and friends, and some become greedy and corrupt. Initiative and imagination on the part of officials are seldom rewarded and often punished, and dull routine tends to be fostered.

The better the administration, the fewer the faults are likely to be; but with poor and corrupt administration, the abuses are flagrant and numerous. Gross injustices are committed. Public money is wasted and given away to favored individuals and groups. Lawyers, "expeditors," and fixers abound. Cases are decided on the basis of influence rather than justice. There is, moreover, a natural tendency for the quality of administration to degenerate with time. When the people decide that the Government should take on some new function and Congress sets up an agency to administer it, enthusiasm runs high. The Government is then able to get devoted supporters of the principle to take on its direction. These men, backed up by public opinion, will work hard and incorruptibly. For a time all will go well.

But soon ossification and degeneration set in. The early enthusiasts die off or leave Government service. Some remain, but lose most of their fire and zeal. The public thinks the battle has been won and turns its attention to other things. The special interests which stand to gain from rulings begin to move in. They designate Washington representatives and set up lobbies. They seek to entertain and to seduce the vital officials. Those who go along with them are rewarded in one form or another. Officials whom they like are, for example, frequently offered jobs at very high salaries in the industry with which they are dealing. This has happened an undue number of times, for example, with the staff and in some cases the members of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. It has happened all too often in the case of procurement officers in the armed forces.

While complaisant officials are being rewarded, the obstinate defenders of the public are frequently ignored or punished. Objections are raised by powerful groups to their renomination or promotion. If renominated, efforts are made to "get something on them" so that they may be refused confirmation by the Senate and disgraced.

Once this process of administrative degeneration sets in, it progresses rapidly and in a short space of time an agency which was originally alert and public spirited becomes waterlogged, indolent and corrupt. If we are to preserve the virtues of free government, we must prevent this degenerative disease of



officialdom from proceeding further and instead raise the moral standards of government. I believe the revelations by three Senatorial investigations of the last two years, namely, that by Senator Hoey into the activities of the "five percenters," by Senator Kefauver and his associates into "organized crime," and by Senator Fulbright's subcommittee on the R. F. C., have developed both the facts and the necessary public opinion to do this.

As one who has worked fairly closely with Senator Fulbright in his painstaking and completely conscientious inquiry, and who has watched many unsavory incidents being brought to light, I have naturally wondered what might be done to help raise the moral behavior both of Government officials and of all those who deal with them. After rather careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the whole level of Government administration would be immeasurably and permanently raised if we were to adopt basic standards of propriety which are to be followed.

These standards could properly be embodied in the Administrative Procedures Act and should deal with the proprieties to be observed by administrative officials, applicants or litigants and their attorneys and representatives, and members of Congress.

It is true that by putting these standards in the Administrative Procedures Act, no criminal sanctions would be imposed upon men who might violate them. The law to that extent would lack "teeth." But the promulgation of this "code" would not only furnish standards as to how the members of these groups should act when they deal with such matters, but it would also give to the press and to the public a clear basis for determining official right from wrong. Moreover, since these standards are primarily intended to deal with the questions of propriety and impropriety, it is perhaps well to begin in this more tentative fashion before fastening such a code on to the harsh structure of the criminal law.

Let us begin, therefore, with a suggested and tentative set of standards for each of the three classes which I have mentioned.

First, so far as Government officials and agencies are concerned, I would suggest that all discussion about a private application or claim with an official or unofficial representative of the applicant or claimant, should take place only during working hours and in public buildings. When a case is pending before a quasi-judicial body such as the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, etc., members of the board which will have to make the ruling should not be approached privately in their chambers by either attorneys for the Government or the litigant to discuss the merits of the case, and any such conversations should deal only with procedural matters.

The purpose behind this provision is, of course, to prevent either public or private parties from getting to the ear of a man who sits in a judicial capacity and to insure that there will be no prejudicing of the final decision. Written or oral arguments of one side should only be advanced in the presence of the other with full opportunity for rebuttal by the opposite side.



Second, it should be required that the Government agency maintain a docket open to public inspection which would show not only the cases listed but the attorneys and representatives involved. To this should be added all fees paid by the applicants or claimants and any "kickbacks," "finders' fees," or other splitting of fees by these attorneys or representatives. Furthermore, Government officials obviously should not accept either favors or gifts of any magnitude from private citizens.

Third, and extremely important, no one in a Government agency who deals with the claim of a private concern should accept employment with it for a period of approximately two years. If an attorney once resigns to go into private practice he should not accept a case involving formal appearance before the same agency for a similar period of time. For men are often consciously or unconsciously seduced by the promise or prospect of lucrative private employment when they quit Government service. Coming events cast their shadows before.

The one possible exception I would make to this rule is in the case of the Patent Office, scientific in nature and where, if all opportunity to practice before the Patent Office were barred to men leaving its employ, there would be virtually few places outside of Government where they could practice their profession.

Private parties dealing with the Government should observe reciprocal proprieties. They should not seek to "pressure" Government officials outside of working hours, entertain them, or to offer gifts or favors, directly or indirectly, to those in Government employ. Similarly, they should list all their representatives before Government bodies and furnish full data on the amounts which they receive and disburse. Finally, in appearing before a regulatory, loan-granting or contract-awarding agency, they should agree not to offer employment for a stated period of time, say two years, to anyone in the agency who deals with their claim, application or contract.

What, then, should be the standards which legislators should observe in dealing with public officials? There are some public administrators who would seal off legislators from all contact with them and prevent Congressmen and Senators from taking up any administrative matter. Legislation, they say, is different from administration and should not be mixed with it. In their judgment, paraphrasing Gilbert and Sullivan, "the fingers of learned statesmen should not itch to interfere in matters which they do not understand."

I am convinced that it would be a great mistake to adopt such an extreme position as this. A bureaucracy is almost never critical of its own mistakes and shortcomings. Like most human beings and organizations it tends stubbornly to stick by earlier decisions, even when wrong, and to cover up its errors. The men and women who are underneath the harrows of the bureaucracy and who are pricked by its prongs can seldom get relief through individual complaints. It is small wonder, therefore, that they turn to their Congressman or Senator for help.



In my Washington and Chicago offices I probably receive close to fifty such appeals a day. Some are unreasonable; some come from people trying to get undue favors; but many are well-grounded and valid. To prevent a legislator from taking up these latter cases would tend to deny justice to countless individuals and would perpetuate administrative abuses and mistakes.

For not only are individuals protected by such Congressional inquiries and specific wrongs righted, but from an accumulation of such cases, legislators from time to time become convinced that certain laws or administrative rulings should be changed. The legislative reforms which are then made help whole classes who, save for the prior investigation of individual cases, would never have found relief. On the whole, therefore, I consider the practice of Congressional inquiry into individual cases to be one of the best protections which this country has against the dangers of an oppressive, overweening and callous bureaucracy.

But there are, of course, standards of propriety which the legislators should themselves observe in such matters. Claims which are patently unreasonable should be tactfully discouraged by them. Other inquiries should be investigated by the staff in so far as possible. In this connection, however, the average voter or official does not realize the pressure of work which now pours in upon a Senator or Congressman. For example, I am at present receiving about 7,000 communications and hundreds of telephone calls a week. The Senators from New York probably receive many more and conversely, those from smaller states fewer. Everybody, it seems, wants something, and they want immediate attention to be paid to their demands. At best, therefore, only a rough sifting can be given to these complaints and requests.

It is proper, I believe, to refer such complaints to the appropriate Government agency for treatment and reply. If the same type of case keeps recurring and the replies of the agency seem unsatisfactory, questions of general policy can then be raised. If, upon a more detailed investigation, a case seems especially meritorious, it is proper to make a courteous recommendation. For since administrative officials properly advise Congress on the revision of laws, it is only fitting that legislators should in turn advise administrators. Interaction between these two agencies of Government is far more healthy than complete isolation.

But there are restraints which a legislator should observe. Neither he nor any member of his family should receive any favors or jobs from people or corporations for whom he has intervened. He should be particularly wary to see that friends do not abuse his confidence and try to use him for improper ends. This is frequently the most difficult task of all, for it is commonly a man's friends, rather than his enemies, who get him into trouble. The legislator should be courteous and gentlemanly in his dealings with administrative officials. He should never threaten them with reprisals if they turn him down, nor offer promises of help if they favor him. The issues should be presented to officials on their merits, and it should be made clear that the administrator is to have the final decision in the individual case.



Such are some of the observations and reflections which have come to me after a year's work in investigating the R. F. C. I do not pretend to have worked out any final answer. But I offer these rough suggestions for what they are worth in the hope that they may promote discussion and action which will raise the standards of conduct in public affairs.

It goes without saying that observance of all the proprieties is not by itself sufficient to guarantee justice, but it can help to eliminate some of the dangers. We must depend also upon the training and selection of Government officials to make the public interest paramount, if the basic moral quality of government service is to be raised.





82D CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. CON. RES. 21

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 28 (legislative day, MARCH 26), 1951

Mr. FULBRIGHT submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),*

### DECLARATION OF POLICY

SECTION 1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to strengthen the faith and confidence of the American people in their Government by assisting in the establishment of higher moral standards in the official conduct of the executive and legislative branches of the Government.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION ON ETHICS IN THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

SEC. 2. For the purpose of carrying out the policy set forth in section 1, there is hereby established a congressional



1 commission to be known as the Commission on Ethics in  
2 the Federal Government (hereinafter referred to as the  
3 "Commission").

4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

5 SEC. 3. (a) The Commission shall be composed of ten  
6 members as follows:

7 (1) Five appointed by the President of the Senate.

8 (2) Five appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
9 Representatives.

10 (b) All members of the Commission shall be appointed  
11 from private life.

12 (c) Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect  
13 its powers but shall be filled in the same manner in which  
14 the original appointment was made.

15 (d) The Commission shall elect a Chairman and a  
16 Vice Chairman from among its members.

17 (e) A quorum of the Commission shall consist of six  
18 members, except that the Commission may establish a  
19 lower number as a quorum for the purpose of taking sworn  
20 testimony.

21 DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

22 SEC. 4. (a) It shall be the duty of the Commission to  
23 study and make recommendations for improvement in the  
24 moral standards of official conduct in the executive and legis-  
25 lative branches of the Government.



1 (b) The Commission shall, within one year after the  
2 appointment of all members, make a report to the Con-  
3 gress of the results of its study and its recommendations.

4 POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

5 SEC. 5. (a) The Commission may, in carrying out this  
6 resolution, sit and act at such times and places, hold such  
7 hearings, take such testimony, require by subpoena or other-  
8 wise the attendance of such witnesses and the production  
9 of such books, papers, and documents, administer such oaths,  
10 have such printing and binding done, and make such ex-  
11 penditures as the Commission deems advisable. Subpenas  
12 shall be issued under the signature of the chairman or any  
13 member of the Commission designated by him and shall be  
14 served by any person designated by the Chairman or any  
15 such member. Any member of the Commission may ad-  
16 minister oaths or affirmations to witnesses appearing before  
17 the Commission.

18 (b) The Commission shall have the power to appoint  
19 and fix the compensation of such personnel as it deems neces-  
20 sary, but the compensation so fixed shall not exceed the  
21 compensation for comparable duties prescribed under the  
22 Classification Act of 1949.

23 COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

24 SEC. 6. The members of the Commission shall each re-  
25 ceive \$50 per diem when engaged in the performance of



1 duties vested in the Commission and shall be reimbursed  
 2 for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred  
 3 by them in the performance of such duties.

#### 4 EXPENSES OF THE COMMISSION

5 SEC. 7. The expenses of the Commission under this  
 6 resolution, which shall not exceed \$ , shall be paid one-  
 7 half from the contingent fund of the Senate and one-half  
 8 from the contingent fund of the House of Representatives  
 9 upon vouchers signed by the chairman. Disbursements to  
 10 pay such expenses shall be made by the Secretary of the  
 11 Senate out of the contingent fund of the Senate, such con-  
 12 tingent fund to be reimbursed from the contingent fund of  
 13 the House of Representatives in the amount of one-half of  
 14 the disbursements so made.

#### 15 EXPIRATION OF THE COMMISSION

16 SEC. 8. The Commission shall cease to exist thirty days  
 17 after the submission of the report provided for in section  
 18 4 (b).



82<sup>d</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

## S. CON. RES. 21

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### CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Establishing the Commission on Ethics in the  
Federal Government.

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By Mr. FULBRIGHT

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MARCH 28 (legislative day, MARCH 26), 1951  
Referred to the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare

WRHS





TENTATIVE LIST OF WITNESSES TO BE INVITED

Dr. Paul Appleby	Mrs. John G. Lee
Mr. Chester Barnard	Mr. John L. Lewis
Mr. Bernard Baruch	Mr. David Lilienthal
Senator William Benton	Mr. M. Albert Linton
Rabbi Philip Bernstein	Dr. Arthur W. MacMahon
Dr. Ralph Bunche	Dr. E. B. McNaughton
Dr. Everett R. Clinchy	Mr. Philip Murray
Dr. James E. Conant	Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr
Mr. Irving Dilliard	Dr. Peter Odegard
Dr. Harold W. Dodds	Dr. Louise Overacker
Mr. Mark Ethridge	Dr. Wilfrid Parsons
Senator J. William Fulbright	Dr. Liston Pope
Mr. William Green	Dr. Roscoe Pound
Dr. Theodore M. Greene	Justice Owen Roberts
Bishop Francis J. Haas	Mr. William H. Ruffin
Judge Learned Hand	Bishop William Scarlett
Mr. Herbert Hoover	Dr. Jasper B. Shannon
Mr. Paul Hoffman	Mrs. Dorothy Shaver
Dr. Robert M. Hutchins	Bishop Bernard J. Sheil
Mrs. Mildred McAfee Horton	Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
Mr. Dechard A. Hulcy	Dr. Thomas V. Smith
Mr. Harold L. Ickes	Miss Anna Lord Strauss
Justice Robert Jackson	Mr. Arthur Hays Sulzberger
Dr. V. O. Key, Jr.	Judge Arthur T. Vanderbilt
Senator Robert M. La Follette	Mr. Thomas J. Watson
Dr. John Lederle	



(Not printed at Government expense)



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 82<sup>d</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

## The Moral Deterioration of American Democracy

SPEECH

OF

HON. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Wednesday, March 27, 1915

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, when the Subcommittee on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation undertook its study, more than year ago, I anticipated the development of little more than the usual issues which grow out of an investigation of the executive branch of the Government. I expected just another case study of an agency, with a finding of facts to be made and an orthodox legislative remedy recommended.

Before we had proceeded very far, however, it became evident that we were dealing not simply with a legal or legislative problem but with a moral problem. The first case to which my attention was called was one involving the employment, by a borrower, of an RFC employee who had recommended the granting of the loan. The Board of Directors of the RFC thought this practice quite proper. I thought it improper. So from the beginning we were confronted with a difference in ethical standards. It presents a very difficult problem. It is difficult because the evils to be dealt with are so seldom amenable to the processes of law. When confronted with an evil, we Americans are prone to say, "There ought to be a law." But the law does not and cannot apply effectively over wide fields of men's activities. It cannot reach those evils which are subtle and impalpable. Generally speaking, it reaches only the overt and the blatant acts of the wicked.

### EVIL BEYOND THE LAW

Much of the evil of the world is beyond the reach of the law. The law cannot prevent gossip. It cannot prevent men from bearing false witness against their neighbors. It cannot restrain men from avarice and gluttony. It cannot restrain a man from betraying his friends. In short, it cannot prevent much of the evil to which men are, unfortunately, too prone. The law being inadequate, men long ago supplemented the law courts with courts of equity, where the spirit of the law, rather than its letter, is paramount.

Underlying the law are the codes of ethics promulgated by the great religions and recognized by all civilized men as being essential to a humane and enlightened existence.

As our study of the RFC progressed, we were confronted more and more with problems of ethical conduct. What should be done about men who do not directly and blatantly sell the favors of their offices for money and so place themselves within the penalties of the law? How do we deal with those who, under the guise of friendship, accept favors which offend the spirit of the law but do not violate its letter?

What of the men outside Government who suborn those inside it? They are careful to see that they not do anything that can be construed as illegal. They operate through lawyers—men who are known as clever lawyers; a cleverness which is like the instinct of the rat that knows how to get the bait without getting caught. Many businessmen, ostensibly reputable businessmen, employ these knavish lawyers to circumvent the law and enrich themselves at Government expense. Too often the law cannot touch them.

### WHO IS AT FAULT?

Who is more at fault, the bribed or the bribers? The bribed have been false to their oaths and betrayers of their trust. But they are often relatively simple men—men of small fortune or no fortune at all—and they weaken before the temptations held out to them by the unscrupulous.

Who are the bribers? They are often men who walk the earth lordly and secure; members of good families; respected figures in their communities; graduates of universities. They are, in short, of the privileged minority, and I submit that it is not unreasonable to ask of them that high standard of conduct which their training ought to have engendered. Is it too much to ask of them that they do not use a Government lending agency as a dumping ground for their own mistakes in judgment? Is it too much to ask of them, the favored few of our country, that they behave with simple honesty; with that honesty which looks, not to the letter of the law, but to its spirit?

Mr. President, the essence of what we have been studying in our committee is but a reflection of what may be seen in

many other phases of our national life. The Government and its activities are, in a very real sense, a mirror of our national life. The inquiry into the RFC has revealed conditions which unfortunately may be found in other activities of our people.

### CYNICISM IN COLLEGES

Let us consider what has developed in our colleges where the characters of our young men and women are being molded. Our colleges, under extreme pressure from the alumni, have become so intent upon winning football and basketball games that they use any means to gain their ends. They hire players who are not bona fide students and thus make a mockery, a farce, of the whole concept of amateur sport for the health and entertainment of our young men. They corrupt not only the hired players, but also the entire student body, who learn from their elders the cynical, immoral doctrine that one must win at all costs.

A byproduct of this doctrine, this necessity for big money, led naturally to betting and to the shocking episode of the widespread bribery of basketball players in New York. I find it difficult to blame the players. They are but following a logical sequence of influences, beginning with the corruption of the sport at its source by pressure from the alumni.

This question of the moral strength of our people is not just an internal domestic matter. It has grave implications in our international relations. Without confidence in their Government, the people will not make the sacrifices necessary to oppose Russia successfully. Professor Toynbee, in his well-known historical study, demonstrated clearly how the vast majority of great civilizations have been destroyed, not as a result of external aggression, but as a consequence of domestic corruption. A democracy can recover quickly from physical or economic disaster, but when its moral convictions weaken it becomes easy prey for the demagogue and the charlatan. Tyranny and oppression then become the order of the day.

### A TOTALITARIAN CONCEPT

I wonder whether in recent years we have unwittingly come to accept the totalitarian concept that the end justifies the means, a concept which is funda-



mentally and completely antagonistic to a true domestic society. Democracy is, I believe, more likely to be destroyed by the perversion of, or abandonment of, its true moral principles than by armed attack from Russia. The evil and insidious materialism of the Communists is a greater danger to us than their guns.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this problem of moral conduct is the revelation that among so many influential people, morality has become identical with legality. We are certainly in a tragic plight if the accepted standard by which we measure the integrity of a man in public life is that he keep within the letter of the law.

Mr. President, the growing size and complexity of our Government, as much as we may deplore it, only emphasizes the need for a clarification, a restatement of the moral standards of governmental conduct. When our Government was small, when it took only 10 percent of our earnings in taxes, we could afford a certain amount of official boodling. Today, it has become too important. We simply can no longer afford moral obtuseness in our public officials.

#### CONDONING CORRUPTION

Scandals in our Government are not new phenomena in our history. What seems to be new about these scandals is the moral blindness or callousness which allows those in responsible positions to accept the practices which the facts reveal. It is bad enough for us to have corruption in our midst, but it is worse if it is to be condoned and accepted as inevitable.

Mr. President, is there anything we can do here in Washington to help our country reaffirm or reestablish a higher concept of public conduct?

Some weeks ago, I suggested, informally, that it would be beneficial to have

a commission of eminent citizens designated by the Congress, to consider the problem of ethical standards of conduct in public affairs. I renew that suggestion now, and I have a resolution which will be ready for presentation to the Senate tomorrow.

Such a commission should be composed of private citizens of outstanding achievement and character, whose integrity is beyond question. As examples of the type of men who should serve, I suggest the following: former Justice Owen Roberts, of Pennsylvania; former Senator La Follette, of Wisconsin; Judge Learned Hand, of New York; Mr. Walter Reuther, of Detroit; Mr. Paul Hoffman, of the Ford Foundation; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary; Dr. Theodore Greene, of Yale; Dr. Hutchins, of Chicago; President Clinchy, of the Conference of Christians and Jews; Father Parsons, of Catholic University. Such a list could be extended indefinitely, but I think I have adequately indicated the type of person I have in mind.

Such a commission, as I conceive of it, would be a catalytic agent, stimulated by public indignation, to draw forth meaning from the mass of data revealed by the several current investigations. The commission would evaluate the conditions which have been exposed, and drawing upon its combined wisdom would restate again, or formulate anew, principles which, it is to be hoped, would strengthen the faith of all decent men in our democratic society.

#### PEOPLE OF LITTLE FAITH

Too many people in our Nation do not believe anything with conviction. They question the precepts of God or of man, indiscriminately. The values of life which were clear to the Pilgrims and the founding fathers have become dim and

fuzzy in outline. False propaganda and the "big lie" of demagogues have created doubt in the minds of men. Professional political hucksters, imported from afar, without local responsibility or restraint, corrupt our free elections and poison democracy at its source. The principal objective of the study I suggest is the restoration of the faith of our people in the validity of the traditional precepts of our democratic society. It is not a job for politicians; it is not a job for the inexperienced; it is a job for the wisest of our citizens under a mandate from the Nation.

Mr. President, in making this suggestion, I am quite prepared to be dubbed naive. It will not be the first time. As I look back upon our history or upon my own experience, nearly every progressive or fruitful move, especially if it was novel, has been considered naive. To expect, or even hope, for an improvement in the moral climate of Washington, is, in the eyes of the boys who know, I am sure, thoroughly utopian.

I confess that I do not know what should be done. If I knew, I would not call upon the wisest men of our country. I would suggest it myself. But, Mr. President, I am unwilling to accept the view that nothing can be done, that the moral deterioration, which is so evident to all, must continue, to its logical conclusion, which is the destruction of our free democratic system. Mr. President, I think something can be done. This may not be the right thing; but, if anyone has a better suggestion, let him step forward.

I submit, Mr. President, that further investigations, as instructive as they may be, are not nearly as important as an understanding of what has already been exposed and action, to remedy the situation.