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The Dodd Case

The disquieting case of Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut and his lucrative testimonial dinners demonstrates the imperative need for Congress to formulate an ethical code for its members and strict procedures for enforcing it.

In fairness to Senator Dodd, it is too soon to arrive at any definitive judgment until the Senate Committee on Standards and Conduct carries out a full investigation. There are conflicting stories as to whether the testimonial dinners in his behalf were arranged to meet his campaign expenses or to supplement his private income. There are quite enough evils and ambiguities attending ordinary campaign fund raising. But money contributed to a public official simply to enable him to live on a more lavish scale than his salary permits is clearly wrong. Only a complete inquiry can make clear whether this was true in Senator Dodd's case.

Recurring episodes of financial irregularities in the Congress generate a poisonous smog over the nation's political life. Senators Clifford Case of New Jersey and Paul Douglas of Illinois have long urged their colleagues to adopt full disclosure rules. A comprehensive revision of the almost useless laws regulating campaign fund raising is also needed. These reforms are essential to protect the good name of Congress. Men jealous of their own reputations ought not to procrastinate further in adopting them.