

NEWS FROM...

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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



1325 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20463

RELEASE: ON RECEIPT

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FEC REFERS REPORT TO ATTORNEY GENERAL

WASHINGTON - JAN. 4 - The Federal Election Commission today voted to refer an investigation report without recommendation to the Attorney General of the United States.

The vote was 5-0, Chairman Vernon W. Thomson not participating.

Copies of the report were also delivered today to President Gerald R. Ford; Senator Howard Cannon, Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee; and Representative Frank Thompson, Chairman of the House Committee on Administration.

In a letter to Attorney General Edward H. Levi, accompanying the report, FEC Vice-Chairman Thomas E. Harris said, "The enclosed report of General Counsel John G. Murphy Jr. in MUR 298(76) dated December 21, 1976, deals with apparent violations of the confidentiality provisions of 2 USC 437g in connection with the Commission's investigation of a complaint relating to the U. S. Senatorial election in Tennessee.During the course of the investigation, it developed that the Commission's chairman Vernon W. Thomson may have been involved, among others.....The five Commissioners participating have now unanimously concluded that it would not be appropriate for the Commission to handle this matter further. We are accordingly referring the report to you as Attorney General."

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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

1325 K STREET N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

January 4, 1977

Honorable Edward H. Levi
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice, Room #5111
Washington, D.C. - 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

The enclosed report of General Counsel John G. Murphy, Jr. in MUR 298(76) dated December 21, 1976, deals with apparent violations of the confidentiality provisions of 2 U.S.C. §437g in connection with the Commission's investigation of a complaint relating to the U.S. Senatorial election in Tennessee.

The report summarizes an investigation which was conducted by General Counsel Murphy and the Commission's Chief Investigator, Mr. Michael Hershman. During the course of this investigation it developed that the Commission's Chairman, Vernon W. Thomson, may have been involved, among others. As you will appreciate, this has presented the Commission with a problem of great delicacy and difficulty.

The report was considered by the Commission on December 22, 1976, and again today, January 4, 1977, with Chairman Thomson absenting himself on both occasions. The five Commissioners participating have now unanimously concluded that it would not be appropriate for the Commission to handle this matter further. We are accordingly referring the report to you as Attorney General.

A copy of all statements taken during the investigation of MUR 298 will be supplied to you as soon as duplication is completed.

Copies of this letter and of General Counsel Murphy's report are being transmitted to the Chairmen of the Senate Rules and House Administration Committees, and will become part of the public record.

Yours very truly,

Thomas E. Harris

THOMAS E. HARRIS
Vice Chairman



Statement by Commissioner
Vernon W. Thomson

January 4, 1977

An article has been published in the press that the Federal Election Commission is investigating the possible involvement of several persons, including myself, in a newspaper article which appeared during the campaign and which reported on action taken by the Commission with respect to a pending Complaint. Disclosure of such information is, of course, forbidden by the statute. The article is correct that such an investigation has been conducted. I have cooperated fully with the investigation thus far and will continue to cooperate with any additional investigatory steps which may be taken.

I categorically deny wrong doing in the matter and am confident that the final resolution of the investigation will so demonstrate.

I am, therefore, in accord with the action of the Commission today in referring the entire matter for further, outside examination. Only by such an examination can the Commission ensure the high degree of integrity to which the public is entitled.