

War assistance from US (supplies) Gueb / 91A / 40

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SLC/34

Room 220,

610, Fifth Avenue,

New York City.

PERSONAL

Dear Butler,

Here is a note on the conversation  
between Strathallan and Senator Hale of  
the Senate Naval Committee.

Yours sincerely,

S. Rawford Childs

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Nevile Butler Esq. C.V.O.,  
British Embassy,  
Washington D.C.

Sir John Walsh is Chairman

I met Senator Hale, Chairman I believe of the Senate Naval Committee, at lunch. The others present were mostly American and all strongly pro-British. A discussion arose about sending destroyers to England and Senator Hale announced "The trouble with all you people and the great American public is that you do not know the facts about the destroyers and so are in no position to make a judgement. Great Britain had at the beginning of the war 206 destroyers. She has lost 29, built 13 new ones and has damaged 48, some of which can probably soon be brought into action again." I said I was afraid that the figures that I had seen were not so favourable and that we probably didn't have more than a half of our original number of destroyers in active service. Senator Hale said "If this is so, then you British are doing 'rotten propaganda' not telling us the facts."

The discussion in which all joined went over the whole field of pros and cons and I got the strong impression that Senator Hale was arguing with a mind made up on the question - that England didn't really need them sufficiently to warrant America taking the risk involved in sending them over and that he had made up his mind after conscientious study as in America's true interest although he himself is pro-British.

Two points arise:

1. Was the Senator right or wrong on his figures?
2. That as he had made up his mind, if my judgement is correct, after a conscientious study of all sides of this problem it might be worth while trying, through whatever are the proper channels, to convert him by a presentation of the case reasoned along technical lines.

Strathallan