

Propaganda: Senate enquiry 969/1A/40

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BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.,

April 4th, 1940.

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No. 316.

My Lord,

I have the honour to transmit to Your Lordship herewith copies of a resolution introduced into the Senate by Senator Clark in September last, calling for the appointment of a committee of seven Senators to study and investigate "the activities of any person, firm, or corporation acting for any foreign nation, by way of propaganda or otherwise, having as their ultimate goal or tending to cause, directly or indirectly, a change in the neutral position of the United States in the conflicts now being waged abroad". The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has just issued a favourable report, of which I also enclose copies, and there is quite a strong likelihood that when the resolution eventually comes on to the floor of the Senate it will be approved and that the committee of investigation which it envisages will then be set up.

2. As Your Lordship is aware, Senator Clark is one of the most rabid of the isolationist senators. His resolution is so worded that the committee of investigation might be precluded, if they adhered to their terms of reference, from investigating any but allied propaganda, since German propaganda might be held not to be aimed at changing "the neutral position"

of/

The Right Honourable

NB:FRHM:AR:NT

The Viscount Halifax, K. G.,

etc., etc., etc.

of the United States of America. Another disagreeable feature of the resolution is that the committee would be empowered to require the attendance of any witnesses and the production of any papers that it might think advisable. Thus it would apparently be within their powers to examine the archives of the British Library of Information in New York.

3. On the other hand it has been stated in the press, and we have some corroborating evidence, that the Administration is compiling a comprehensive report on German propaganda which American officials know to be highly organised and very active.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch with enclosures to the Director of the British Library of Information. In the event of the resolution being approved by the Senate, I will consult with Mr. Fletcher as to the measures he should take to safeguard the confidential parts of his archives.

I have the honour to be,
 with the highest respect,
 My Lord,
 Your Lordship's most obedient
 humble servant,
 (SGD) LOTHIAN