

Security

1 Col.Corderman

1. It has come to my attention that in several instances SSA personnel have been heard to say "What a story all this would make! I can hardly wait until the war is over."

2. Remarks such as the foregoing are obviously the result of a complete misunderstanding of the permanently binding nature of the secrecy oath taken by all SSA personnel prior to their acceptance for duty.

3. It is apparent that insufficient emphasis has been placed upon the underlined clause in the attached copy of the oath.

4. It is recommended that:

a. Immediate steps be taken to call to the attention of all officers, enlisted men, and civilian employes the fact that the secrecy oath was drawn up and is intended to be just as binding after the war as it is during the war.

b. Attempt should be made to cause legislation to be enacted with a view to accomplishing what the British Defense of the Realm Act accomplishes, viz, provides strict penalties for disclosure, without proper authority, of information detrimental to the National Defense. I think an act could be drawn to do what is necessary in this regard without infringing in any way upon the rights of free speech and now is the time. However, in drafting such legislation it is essential that technically qualified people assist in the work so as to avoid a repetition of the

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very unfavorable publicity that arose when something like this was attempted in 1933 in the case of a Yardley book that had to be suppressed, which led to the enactment of a perfectly futile and silly law.

5. The enactment of appropriate legislation would have a protective effect far beyond the scope of anything we could do here because after all the oath which we administer "has no teeth in it" and, what is more important, a law would apply to all persons, not only those in SSA. For example, there are probably several score of people who handle our output in one way or another and over whom we have absolutely no control. Nor do I think any special oath is administered in their case; yet from a secrecy point of view, it is just as essential that they be prohibited from disclosing this kind of information as it is that SSA people be prohibited from doing so.

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