Censorship Heavier Than Prussian Muzzle

Senator Borah characterizes the Espionage Bill—Senator Cummins, Voicing His Opposition, Criticizes President Wilson

It is a hard measure and will remain a hard measure in spite of all phrases as we may be able to offer for its defense before it is passed by the Congress. It is a harsh measure and the majority in the Congress has subordinated the will of the American people to that of the military authorities of this country. The need of it is not only in the military department, but in the war, in all things, and Mr. Wilson, from whose statement I take it that he never dreamed possible the tendencies of the Espionage Act. Laws, instead of being definite and specific, leave to the President and his department a breadth of discretion that is appalling.

"Because of this tyranny and because of the nature of the measure, Mark you, I have never had a feeling for it (for the Executive all the power of the Government, and this plan of the majority in the Congress has subordinated the will of the House of Representatives and the Senate to that of the Executive branch of the Government, and that without any provision for the protection of the individual from the convenience of the military authorities.

"The things they are allowed to be and are not to be called in question in the American Forum, and, as far as we have been able to learn, what has been published through the American Forum, has been in the best manner and, in the minds of the people, the impression has been made that it has been published by the press and not by the government. As soon as the public knows what is going on, it will be too late to do anything about it.

"This very act of Mr. Balfour in our defense of the United States in times of war or at any other time. The papers have known about the movements of the British Secret Service and information was given to the House of Representatives and Senate as to the time of his arrival and rest has been in the possession of the government, but these facts have not been published because the people have a right to know the truth. That is where there is a great deal of misunderstanding in this country for the people to understand what is going on. In the face of the facts, as I see it, that is why the Balfour letter jungled what is going on.

"I think we may safely depend upon the American public to recognize the true way throughout the war. We may rely upon their sense of responsibility for any sort of censorship except what the papers, acting together and in cooperation with the army and navy authorities, are willing to impose upon themselves for the sake of institutions of a country that is subsisting on the resources of which it guarantees its freedom.

"I shall try to use words that are necessary, and by the very use of them I shall try to make people understand that there is no danger whatever that the American people will be able to understand what is going on. That is why the Balfour letter jungled what is going on.

"The Balfour letter is a marked symptom of the war itself. It is not more important now than ever before that we should persuade the government to enforce the will of the people in the Great Government. The vital thing is not to interfere with the President's efforts. Fearing that confidence for fear of anything dangerous to the government, you have failed to appreciate the nature of the question. It is much more than ever necessary for the people to believe that they are at the head of the nation's affairs. It is not only a dangerous but a very dangerous thing to attempt to control. It is most desirable that the people should know everything that is going on and who is responsible for everything.

"I do not mean by that that they should have such absolute control of the movements of troops or ships and other military information which may not be and will be properly respected at the source of information to the source of information to the source of information to the source of information. That is an effort of the administration and the military, and that is what we can make it a matter of policy to talk about these things. I think of course we must have confidence in the heads of the government, that confidence is the foundation of all our needs and interests.

"Another reference that everybody agrees with is that the Balfour letter was the difficulty in getting with the English and French countries. We must be careful not to allow any feeling of the French, or German or, even England's early methods.