

THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

Washington, Feb. 15.—Ever since the beginnings of the American Government, Congress has been suspicious of every act of the Executive having to do with foreign affairs.

George Washington's warning against "entangling alliances" in his Farewell Address took root in the spirit of the people and has become, in the course of a century and a half, almost as sacred an American principle as the Constitution itself.

It was that principle which kept the American nation, when we entered the World War, from becoming in any official sense an "ally" of the powers which were fighting against Germany and Austria. We were associates but not allies.

President Wilson and the Congress of that time took great pains to make it clear to all the world that America was fighting for its own hand and was not bound by any acts or agreements of the Allied Powers.

And it was the ingrained American fear of foreign alliances, as much as anything else, which prevented the United States from becoming a member of the League of Nations after the great war.

With that historical background clearly in mind, it is easy to understand the furor which has been stirred up by the disclosure that President Roosevelt had authorized a secret French mission to inspect American aircraft factories with a view to ordering a large number of fighting planes.

Result Of Accident
The disclosure was the result of an accident. A new type of military plane was being tested in Los Angeles. It crashed and the pilot was killed. His companion, however, was rescued from the wreck with two broken legs, before the plane caught fire.

Officials of the aircraft company said he was a mechanic named Smith. It leaked out, however, that the injured man was Paul Chemidlin, a representative of the French War office, over here with a group selecting planes for French purchase.

The disclosure started Congress. An inquiry was begun which revealed that M. Chemidlin and the rest of the French mission had received specific authority by order of the President himself to inspect American airplane factories

and take part in tests of new military planes.

Probably nobody had the slightest objection to the purchase of American aircraft by non-combatant European powers. It had been reported that not only the French but the British were buying or about to buy planes in this country.

Indeed, the British orders for 400 fighting planes were increased to 650 after the incident of the injured Frenchman was disclosed. And France had openly announced that it intended to buy at least 500 planes in America.

Favored Special Favours
What stirred up Congress, including those friendly and unfriendly to the President, was the feeling that some sort of international negotiations were going on, clouded in secrecy. It looked as if special favors were being shown to France.

Mr. Roosevelt sent for the members of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, seventeen Senators of both parties, and in a closed-door session lasting nearly two hours he talked with a great deal of frankness about the international situation as he saw it. He pledged the committee to secrecy, but nobody in Washington has ever found a way to keep anything secret which seventeen politicians know.

The Senators stalked. They did not all agree on the exact language the President had used, but they were in substantial agreement that he had insisted that there was no alliance, secret or otherwise, between the United States and France; that he had welcomed the French desire to buy enough American planes to keep our aircraft factories busy until the United States is ready to order the anticipated several thousand war planes; that no credit had been extended or guaranteed by our government but the planes bought by both France and England were being paid for as delivered, "cash on the barrelhead." If any other nation wanted to buy American planes on the same terms they could do so.

But the President, according to some of the Senators, stressed his belief that American interests were being threatened by the rise of the dictatorships, and that if the democracies of Western Europe should be forced to succumb to superior force America would be in grave danger.

Interpreted By Senators
According to some of the Senators who heard him, he gave the impression that he believed the United States would have to join in the defense of England and France, in a crisis. One phase which some of the Senators attributed to him was that "Our first line of defense is in France."

The President took notice of the turmoil which his actions had caused by declaring, at the most largely attended press conference since the early days of his first Administration, that some Senators had deliberately distorted the tenor of his talk to them, and denouncing as a deliberate lie the statement that he had said that the American frontier was hereafter in France. Pressed for a clear statement of his Administration's foreign policy, he dictated the following:

1. We are against any entangling alliances, obviously.
2. We are in favor of the maintenance of world trade for everybody—all nations—including ourselves.
3. We are in complete sympathy with any and every effort made to reduce and limit armaments.
4. As a nation—as American people—we are sympathetic with the peaceful maintenance of political, economic and social independence of all nations in the world.

JOHN W. EDWARDS

Youngsville—John W. Edwards died at his home in Youngsville on Feb. 8, 1939. Funeral services were conducted Thursday afternoon at New Hope Christian Church by Rev. H. O. Baker, assisted by Rev. W. M. Walters, Douglas Branch, Lucius Evans and Dr. Forrest C. Feezor.

David, Vernon and Joe Lambert, Wesley Medlin, William Hicks and Charles Raymond Edwards, grandsons of Mr. Edwards acted as pallbearers. His death was not unexpected as he had been sick for more than two weeks. He leaves to mourn

their loss besides a host of friends, his wife, Mrs. Lela King Edwards, three sons, W. F. and J. R. Edwards, of Louisburg, and Johnnie T. Edwards, of Youngsville, and three daughters, Mrs. B. A. Lambert, of Raleigh, Mrs. Effie Medlin, of Louisburg, and Mrs. Earnest Young, of Youngsville, all of whom were with him at the time of his death.

TOO MANY RABBITS

Out of 4,000 peach trees two years old in one of Hawley Poole's orchards in Moore County, not over 500 have escaped damage from rabbits which have eaten the bark off entirely around the trunks of the trees. Only about 200 trees were left without any damage whatever.

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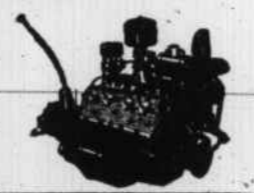


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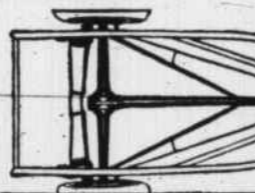
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