

program by foolish and ridiculous broadcasts deliberately designed to anger the Congress and the people, or the fool killer is overdue.

Let us correct it vigorously, keeping in mind the real purpose—and need—of the program.

GLADSTONE WILLIAMS

Clearing Up An Attack on Roosevelt

WASHINGTON—The current series of articles in Collier's magazine, based on the private papers of the late Harry L. Hopkins, clears up one point about President Roosevelt that was made the target of abusive attack by the isolationist press of the country during the war period. After the United States was drawn into the war the isolationist press severely criticized the President for a statement he had made at Boston, in a campaign speech in 1940, in which he said: "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

Later when it became necessary for the United States to send troops abroad to carry on our fight against the Axis, Mr. Roosevelt's critics sought to hold this statement against him. He was charged with duplicity and all sorts of evil crimes. He was accused of going back on his word and deceiving the American people as a means of getting elected to a third term.

Robert E. Sherwood, the official Hopkins biographer and author of the current series of articles, gives the background of how the statement was incorporated in the Roosevelt Boston speech.

The Republicans, he recalls, were trying to terrify the country with the thought that Roosevelt was bent on taking the United States into the war. A fear of war hysteria was being built up. Some Democratic leaders were becoming jittery over the election outcome. They were demanding, as Mr. Sherwood says, "that Roosevelt provide absolute guarantee to the mothers of America that their sons would not fight."

While going over the final draft of his speech en route to Boston, the President was again confronted with these demands.

"But how often do they expect me to say that?" Roosevelt is quoted as asking. "It's in the Democratic platform and I've repeated it a hundred times."

Convinced that it would be helpful to repeat the statement again, the President consented for it to be written into his campaign speech. It later came to be quoted almost as often as another Roosevelt utterance about "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Mr. Sherwood then reveals the following interesting discussion between the President and Judge Samuel Rosenman, one of his advisers

on the train, as taken from the Hopkins papers:

"Rosenman, whose duty it was to remember everything, mentioned the fact that the Democratic platform had added the words, 'except in case of attack.' Roosevelt said he could see no need to tack that on now. 'Of course we'll fight if we're attacked. If somebody attacks us, then it isn't a foreign war, is it? Or do they want me to guarantee that our troops will be sent into battle only in the event of another War Between the States?'"

The shallowness of the isolationist attacks on the President is brought clearly into focus by these remarks. It was not necessary for him to qualify his statement about sending our troops to fight foreign wars with the proviso, "except in case of attack."

Any schoolboy would have understood that no President would be called upon to make an exception of that kind. If Mr. Roosevelt had been held strictly accountable to the bare statement he had made, it would have meant that we could not have defended ourselves against enemy attacks in any place except in the United States.

According to the construction put upon the President' words by his isolationist enemies, we would have had to wait, after the Pearl Harbor attack, for the Germans and the Japs to carry the fight to our own shores before resisting them.

The obvious answer to that is, of course, that any President who might have been so foolhardy as to follow a course of the kind would have been impeached and thrown out of office as incompetent. And yet the isolationists did actually try to make an issue of the President's pledge on the score. The whole thing was too ridiculous for words.

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