

Axis Investigation

Probe Jury Will Question Writer Today

By Dillard Stone

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Ralph Townsend, Scribner's Commentator writer whose testimony has been sought for nearly a month, will go before the special grand jury on Axis agents today.

A Nation-wide hunt for Townsend was ordered when he failed to appear on November 25. Last week he reported at the Department of Justice with the explanation that he had been in the South on a vacation and did not know he was wanted.

Townsend at one time was a consular officer in China and recently was active in advocating that this country pursue a policy of neutrality and peace with the Axis powers. When he appeared here, Special Prosecutors William Power Maloney and Edward J. Hickey, jr., of the Department of Justice propaganda squad, were making investigations in Lake Geneva, Wis.

Prosecutors Expected to Appear

The prosecutors today will doubtless lay their findings before Foreman John S. Gorrell and his fellow grand jurors. Published in Lake Geneva were Scribner's and a weekly newspaper, The Herald, both of which were anti-interventionist.

It was to Townsend that Bessie Feagin, Scribner's promotion manager, testified that she delivered a copy of the secretly compiled master mailing list of the anti-interventionist group. Miss Feagin said this happened shortly after the special grand jury turned its guns on Scribner's and called her as the first witness.

Townsend told The Post yesterday that he had used a mailing list in his work but denied that he took it with him when he left Lake Geneva the day a Federal marshal went there to hand him a subpoena. Townsend said that as far as he knew the mailing list still was in the Scribner's office.

Denies Knowledge of Money

Townsend said he knew nothing of the large packages of \$20 bills—which totaled more than \$30,000—which were said to have been handed to Scribner's officials, tossed in their living room window and left on a table in the hallway. This money, The Post revealed several weeks ago, apparently financed part of the propaganda venture in Lake Geneva.

Townsend said he was only an employe, working to aid policies in which he believed and knew nothing of the financing of the Lake Geneva enterprises.

"I saw nothing wrong there," he said last night, "and I would not have remained there if I had. I was working with people in whom I had—and still have—absolute confidence. They are good Americans."

Townsend added that he urged a policy of neutrality as long as it was possible and that he now believes in aiding the national war effort in every possible manner.