

513 H St., nw
Washington, D. C.
June 6, 1941

Dr. L.M. Birkhead
Friends of Democracy
103 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Birkhead,

I'm sorry I haven't had a chance to write you sooner and thank you for the nice letter you wrote about my Rohm & Haas place. I haven't been busy on some follow-ups which are, of course, hard to document and prove completely.

It occurs to me, after hearing of your letter to Congressman Sabath, that you will probably be interested in an effort to get a Congressional investigation of shipments of oil to the Axis powers. Briefly, here is the story (confidentially):

Congressman John Coffee of Washington and Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa, both Democrats, introduced a concurrent resolution (SConRes 10 and HConRes 30) providing for the establishing of a joint Senate and House investigating committee to inquire into the shipments of war materials to the Axis powers. Both Members were primarily interested in oil, but knowing the power of the oil interests they carefully refrained from pointing this out. In the Senate, evidently with little trouble, Senator Gillette got a favorable report from the Commerce committee and the resolution is now before the Audit and Control Committee, which is controlled by Senator Byrnes. In the House there was some difficulty in getting hearings before the Rules committee. However, there were several executive sessions (that is, secret hearings) at which some administration people testified. I gather that Dean Acheson, undersecretary of State, opposed any investigation of shipments to the axis.

Both Senator Gillette and Congressman Coffee entirely agree with your request addressed to Congressman Sabath. Each has agreed to amend the resolutions to provide for such a broadened investigation (at my suggestion) and Congressman Coffee's new resolution, HRes 225 contains the language which would enable this investigation. A copy of this resolution is enclosed. This resolution provides for a House investigation. Its purpose is not to defeat the earlier proposal, but is actually a protection. It is calculated unfriendly persons from getting a House investigation along these lines.

Congressman Sabath is appearing before the House Patents Committee Tuesday morning to testify on several legislative proposals dealing with German Patents. If I can get copies of the transcript of Tuesday's hearings I'll be glad to make it available to you if you are interested.

The press release issued by Coffee's office is enclosed. If you want any further information I'm sure his secretary, Paul Olson, a fine fellow, will be glad to provide it.

I'm certain they'll be grateful.
Yours,