

Probe Due On Plastics

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4/20/42

PM WASHINGTON, Apr. 20. — The Senate Patents Committee is determined to do what it can to stop War and Navy Dept. interference with anti-trust prosecutions. The prosecutions have been bringing to light the international patents cartel agreements hobbling American war production.

This week the Committee will hear testimony on the way those patent agreements have been stifling development of new plastics so important in modern warfare.

Next week the Committee will question Under Secretary of War Patterson and Under Secretary of the Navy Forrestal on the agreement reached several weeks ago among War, Navy and Justice Depts. to suspend certain anti-trust prosecutions "for the duration."

In the meantime, on instructions of Sen. Robert M. La Follette, Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold will present a formal statement on the sudden halting of the General Electric light bulb case in Trenton last Monday.

Citing PM's revelations last Wednesday, on the peculiar background of this suspension La Follette asked Arnold whether the Trenton case did or did not come within the purview of the general agreement.

Under the general agreement, no anti-trust investigation or prosecution was to be stopped unless War and Navy Depts. presented their objections in writing to the Attorney General. The Attorney General could appeal to the White House.

But the anti-trust suit in Trenton stopped after private counsel telephoned to Under Secretary of War Patterson. Patterson and Forrestal telegraphed to the judge, asking suspension of the case for a month, and did so without making any effort to reach the Attorney General.

Basis of War-Navy Dept. interference is the contention that the suits take up time of busy business executives, but Arnold pointed out General Electric officials were not too busy to proceed with a patent-infringement suit against another company.

Arnold put two documents into the record which threw a light on the working of the General Electric Patents cartel in the field of electric bulbs. Both were letters from General Electric files.

One referred to a method of manufacturing flashlight bulbs so good that they outlasted three batteries. Efforts were promised to reduce the quality of these bulbs.

The other letter disclosed that General Electric had withdrawn from public view an exhibit prepared for the World's Fair, which showed the superiority of fluorescent lighting.