

'... Publicity ...'

Rieber, Texas Co. Head, Quits After Westrick Disclosures

PM
8/13/40

Stockholders Said to Have Forced Action To Prevent Company Acquiring Pro-Nazi Taint

Capt. Torkild Rieber, German-speaking, alien-born head of the Texas Corp. has resigned his \$100,000-a-year job as chairman of the company's board of directors.

In a statement released by the company, Capt. Rieber's resignation was attributed directly to the unfavorable publicity from disclosures of his friendship for Dr. Gerhard Alois Westrick, Hitler's special emissary to American industry.

Capt. Rieber had admitted that it was through his influence that the Texas company's funds were used to buy a \$1570 car for Westrick to use while traveling about America on Hitler's business.

Different Explanation Now

Last week, Capt. Rieber explained it was "good business" for the Texas Corp. to provide Westrick with the car. Today Capt. Rieber has a different explanation.

"Dr. Westrick," says the Texas company's statement, "rather than make use of the company's car, stated he would prefer to have one of his own. Because of exchange restrictions, Capt. Rieber arranged for the money to buy the car, which money was thereafter to be repaid to the company."

However good his intentions, Capt. Rieber's transaction proved embarrassing.

After a hearing conducted by the State Motor Vehicles Commission had disclosed that Westrick had falsified his application for a driver's license, illegally registered the car's ownership and had failed to report a change of address, the Commission forwarded its findings to the District Attorney's office for examination.

The announcement by the Texas company's directors came after a seven-hour meeting in the offices at 125 E. 42nd St. Capt. Rieber was present at the meeting. At its conclusion, a statement was released which disclosed:

That Capt. Rieber had submitted his resignation "because of certain publicity detrimental to the Texas company," arising from the board chairman's close association with Westrick.

Follows PM's Disclosures

Although Capt. Rieber's resignation, said the statement, "was regretted by each individual member of the board," yet, "under existing circumstances, it seemed advisable to accept."

This action followed by only a few hours PM's disclosure that influential Texas company stockholders were negotiating to obtain Capt. Rieber's resignation, for fear that U. S. motorists might unfairly allow prejudice against Capt. Rieber to influence their purchases of Texaco gasoline and oil.

In the same statement Capt. Rieber insisted that the Texas company had not sold a single barrel of oil to Germany "since before the start of the present war." He also said that he not seen Westrick since June 11,

and that he had never visited the Nazi emissary in Westrick's much publicized and recent Scarsdale home.

Capt. Rieber is of Norwegian birth but was emphatic yesterday in lauding his American citizenship.

"Under no circumstances," said the statement, "would he (Capt. Rieber) be identified with, or sympathetic to, any kind of un-American activity."

Peace Conditions Relayed

Capt. Rieber, however, visited Germany in 1938 and was reported to have been closeted for two hours with Grand Marshall Goering. On his return, he saw President Roosevelt and it was believed he relayed the conditions under which Germany would make peace.

During the Spanish Civil War, Capt. Rieber sold quantities of Texas company oil to the Fascists, explaining that he considered the Franco forces "a better business risk." (Also see page 8.)—w. r.



Captain Torkild Rieber