

M.D.R
3/24/39

Spies in US Increase -- Murphy

U. S. Departments Cooperating to Fight Espionage

WASHINGTON, March 23—(UP) — Attorney-General Frank Murphy said today there was evidence of increased foreign espionage activity in the United States.

Asked at a press conference whether Nazi and fascist espionage had increased during the last few months, Murphy replied:

"I can't answer that specific question, but if you simply ask about espionage, it is evident there has been an increase."

Murphy said that "there is a new awareness of this situation and preparedness to deal with it effectively."

U. S. DEPARTMENTS

He said anti-espionage work was being carried on through close cooperation of the Justice, State, Treasury, War, Navy and Postoffice Departments.

"Every week I go over the situation with Mr. Hoover. (Director J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI)" he said. "And we have pretty definite ideas about what action to take."

"In times like these we should have the investigation under a central control like the FBI and keep

abreast of daily developments so that no espionage can progress far before being discovered.

"There is a necessity today of being on guard and not allowing the belief to grow that in a democracy we are indifferent about this thing."

'ACT WITH DISPATCH'

Pressed for details of the anti-spy setup, Murphy said he felt the best plan was "not to talk, but act with dispatch."

Murphy said representatives of the Dies Committee on un-American activities were studying latest information gathered by the FBI. He said the data may be made public after certain confidential items are deleted.

He expressed surprise that Dies today introduced a resolution to make public 12 volumes of data compiled by the FBI on activities of the German-American Bund.

NOT PUBLIC

The evidence, submitted last year for the use of the Dies Committee, was accompanied by a letter stating the department's policy of not making public such reports, Murphy said.

He added, however, that he would authorize publication of the Bund evidence, which he said was statistical and factual.

"This is the first knowledge that I have had that Congressman Dies wanted to make the Nazi report public," Murphy said. "I would have been glad to authorize him to make it public if I had been asked about it."

"I believe all department reports, except possibly the confidential matter, should be made public."