

Post 12/13/39

Wife Joins F.D.R. Attack on Dies; Cites Bill of Rights to Prober

WASHINGTON, Dec 13 (UP).—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt joined the President today in implicitly criticizing the charge of the Dies Committee that consumers' organizations were Communist "transmission belts."

Mrs. Roosevelt, without mentioning the committee report directly, said today in her column, "My Day:"

"If you are not accused of being a Communist these days, you may be a Communist front and now you may be a Communist transmission belt, and these names apply to both individuals and organizations."

President Roosevelt yesterday called attention to the fact that Chairman Dies appointed himself a subcommittee of one to receive the report made by the committee's research director, J. B. Matthews, a former official of a consumer organization.

The procedure spoke for itself, the President said.

Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out that

December 15 marks the 148th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights, and cited Article VI guaranteeing certain rights to criminals in criminal prosecutions.

"I am wondering," she said, "if in the present day these rights should not be observed for all people, whether accused in a criminal case or whether merely accused through the public press."

"It seems to me that the right 'to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense,' would be a safeguard to a great many people today who find themselves suddenly held up as dangerous citizens when they have not had the opportunity to be heard."

Mrs. Roosevelt said that if organizations can be accused of being

dominated by Communists without respect for these safeguards, "it is going to take a really strong-minded person with a great indifference to what may be said about him to join an organization, even though the objectives as they are presented seem in accordance with his beliefs."

"Let's fight realities with all we have," she concluded. "Let's fight for our democracy and our Bill of Rights, and wherever we find things in which we do not believe let's be free to express ourselves, but let us pray not to be dominated by fears or disturbed by nightmares."

The charges in the consumers' report have been denied by the organizations named and assailed by other members of the Dies Committee, who said that they knew nothing of the report until it appeared in the newspapers. Representative Jerry Voorhis (Dem., Cal.) denounced the action and demanded that the committee allow the thirteen organizations to testify.