

Senate Group Votes Quiz of 'Headache Boy'

By WILLARD EDWARDS

The Senate Post Office Committee yesterday favorably reported a resolution calling for an investigation of the publication by smear Columnist Drew Pearson of excerpts from the private correspondence of Miss Vivien Kellems Westport Conn. businesswoman, who has voiced anti-New Deal views.

The Senate's overwhelming approval of the inquiry is expected today or next Tuesday.

Committee Appointed

Acting upon the assumption that the resolution will be passed, the committee appointed as a subcommittee to conduct the quiz the following members:

Senators McKellar (D.), of Tennessee; Eastland (D.), of Mississippi; McClellan (D.) of Arkansas; Reed (R.), of Kansas, sponsor of the resolution, and Ferguson (R.), of Michigan.

McKellar, chairman of the full committee, insisted upon heading the subcommittee. His cross-examination of Pearson is awaited with interest. On April 25, McKellar took the Senate floor to characterize the columnist as "an infamous, dirty, low down, mean, lying scoundrel and skunk."

Price May Testify

This outburst, to which other Senators added derogatory opinions of Pearson, was precipitated by an item in Pearson's column asserting that Senator McKellar had once drawn a knife against a colleague. McKellar asserted the charge was without any basis whatever and challenged anyone to present a witness to the alleged attack.

Censorship Director Byron Price has asked to be the first witness at the hearings. He has disclaimed responsibility for the publication of matter entrusted to the mails and assured the committee of his co-operation in designing methods to prevent further abuse of the censorship system.

While the airing of passages

from Miss Kellems' romantic letters to a German engineer in Argentina provoked the investigation, Senator Reed said the probe will go into all phases of the manner in which New Deal agencies have been reading private correspondence to foreign lands and making political use of information thus obtained.

FBI Accused of Opening Mail

The subcommittee will also delve into reports that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is opening the letters written by wives of servicemen at camps in this country.

The censorship office opens all foreign mail and makes copies of excerpts which it deems of interest to a number of Government agencies. These copies, marked "confidential," are sent to the Justice, State and Navy departments and other Government bureaus.

Scores of Federal employes have access to these copies and it is believed that through one or more of these workers Pearson obtained the excerpts which he used to ridicule Miss Kellems, who now attracted the New Deal's ire.

Senator Reed called attention to the fact that there is provision for a fine of \$1,000 and two years imprisonment, or both, for illegal release of confidential material by Government employes. One of the purposes of the investigation, he said, will be to determine if release of the censorship excerpts comes under this provision.

It is considered probable that the subcommittee will ascertain what action, if any, can be taken against Pearson, who has been labeled "a chronic liar" by President Roosevelt and a purveyor of "monstrous falsehoods" by Secretary of State Hull.

The Washington Post, which prints Pearson's column, Wednesday published a front-page apology for false statements made by Pearson in an attack upon a Navy captain. The statement noted that Pearson had "maintained his position" after the Navy Department had issued a denial of the allegations in the story, but that the facts had proved him wrong and the newspaper expressed "regret for the error."