

Probers Clash With Price on Kellems Mail

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Censorship Director Byron Price yesterday flatly refused for "security" reasons to show a Senate investigating committee intercepts from the mail of Miss Vivian Kellems, Connecticut industrialist, except under subpoena, but later was reported to have changed his mind.

Following a late afternoon conference with the censorship director, a member of the Senate group predicted Price will show the intercepts to the committee at an executive session of the committee Monday.

"I don't think a subpoena will be necessary," the committeeman said.

Ready to Call Others

After a sharp clash with Price over production of the intercepts in open hearings earlier, and close questioning of State Department officials over "leakage" of so-called pocket-editions of the letters, the committee was reported ready to call a long list of State Department employes having access to intercepts.

Price appeared before the committee investigating partial publication of Miss Kellems' letters to Count Karl Frederick von Zedlitz, a German living in Argentina and on the State Department's blacklist, after a lively committee session with George P. Shaw, assistant chief of the State Department's division of Foreign Activity Correlation.

Duplicates Accessible

Shaw had testified that his division had duplicate copies of the intercepts, and that these were accessible to as many as 30 divisions in the department. He also declined to turn them over to the committee, saying he was under instructions from Price not to deliver them to anyone outside the department.

Price said there were two reasons why the intercepts should not be released to the committee. In the first place, he said, it was a war security matter, because the intercepts are now marked with symbols it would be dangerous to reveal. In addition, he said they contain information that should not be made public.

As the public hearings broke up, Senator Clyde Reed (R., Kans.) asked Price if he would bring the intercepts before the committee tomorrow.

"Not without a subpoena," said Price.

Asked earlier by Senator James O. Eastland (D., Miss.) if he thought he would be "violating his trust" if he made them available to a Senate committee, Price said: "I would be moving in that direction. If I made these available, you would want the 70 or 80 others we have on the German in Argentina."

Several times Reed tangled with the censorship director, pointing out that some of the intercepts have been made public already by a Congressman and a radio commentator.

In support of his position, Price cited a ruling by former Attorney General Robert H. Jackson upholding the FBI in refusing to turn over certain information to the House Naval committee, and other attorney general rulings dating back to 1904.

Shaw told the committee he had questioned every member of his section trying to "trace" how the intercepts had leaked and had been unable to find out.

"They must be highly confidential when not more than 500 persons in the State Department can read them," observed Reed. "There are many leaks in the State Department. It is notorious for leaks. Why the State Department puts up with them is a mystery to me."