

Winchell to Sue Hoffman for Libel

Will Ask \$250,000; Cites Alleged Letter On Navy Status

New York, April 2 (AP).—Walter Winchell, after a radio broadcast tonight in which he replied to charges made against him by Representative Martin Dies (D., Tex.), announced he would file a libel suit for \$250,000 tomorrow against Representative Clare Hoffman (R., Mich.)

"It's the first suit I've ever filed against anyone," the columnist declared.

He said the suit, to be filed in Federal court in Washington, D. C., would be based on a letter from Hoffman to the editor of the Marcellus (Mich.) News.

Winchell quoted the letter as saying that Hoffman, through his pressure in the House of Representatives, had had Winchell stripped of his Navy uniform, stripped of his duties and stripped of his pay.

He said the letter had been published "very recently, after Hoffman had demanded that the Secretary of the Navy give the House the facts in Winchell's Navy status," and had received those facts.

Winchell is a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve, on inactive duty.

"Hoffman carelessly forgot he was not protected by congressional immunity this time," Winchell asserted.

Commenting on Winchell's announcement, Hoffman said in Washington that "there isn't any law against filing a libel suit. Winchell ought to know more about libel suits than anyone else."

Hoffman said he did not know anything about a letter to the Marcellus newspapers and added:

"I imagine it was a statement that appeared in the Congressional Record. The newspaper gets the Record."

In his broadcast over the Blue Network, Winchell discussed 11 charges Dies had made against him.

"Mr. Dies told you that I was part of a smear bund," he declared. "The duty of Mr. Dies was to examine the smear bund, if any, while it was being incubated, not denounce it when it was full grown—and the reason Mr. Dies did not is that it never existed."

After the broadcast, Winchell told newsmen that his sponsors had cut out two major parts of his talk.

"I wanted to say to Mr. Dies 'I have asked for a subpoena for the last time—now I defy it,'" the columnist said. Winchell has asked repeatedly that he be allowed to answer Dies' charges before a congressional committee.

He also wanted to speak of congressional attacks on the Dies Committee, he said.

His actual broadcast he dismissed as "my idea of a boring, windy talk. . . . I did it reluctantly."

Winchell's sponsor, the Andrew Jergens Co., announced on the program that after tonight the Dies-Winchell controversy "is closed, as far as this program is concerned."