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Dies May Subpoena Scripts to Prove Commentators Err

By the Associated Press.

Charging that "fully 60 per cent of the statements" of some radio commentators can be "proved to be utterly false," Chairman Dies said today the House Committee on Un-American Activities may soon "investigate this matter on the ground that it is distinctly un-American."

Representative Dies currently is engaged in a controversy with Walter Winchell, commentator and columnist, whom he assailed in a House speech last week. Mr. Winchell declared in a broadcast last night that efforts were being

made in unidentified Washington circles to impugn his integrity.

May Subpoena Scripts.

Mr. Dies said in an interview his committee may subpoena the scripts of certain radio commentators over a period of several years to take each statement "and establish its truth or falsity."

The Texan said he proposed to find out whether broadcasting companies which permit the dissemination of falsehoods would be willing "to afford maligned persons an opportunity to answer false charges over the same facilities and to the same audience."

"If the broadcasting companies are unwilling to do this, the Congress and the people will understand that they are deliberately furthering and aiding a program of un-American propaganda," he declared. "This whole question will be brought to a showdown in the near future and in my opinion it will develop into a major issue."

Says NBC Refused Request.

In his speech last week Mr. Dies told the House that the Blue Network had rejected his request that he be allowed to use part of Mr. Winchell's radio time to answer charges he said the columnist had made against him.

Without mentioning any individuals, Mr. Dies said some radio commentators "have become adept in taking advantage of the loopholes in the libel laws."

"The technique of smear by innuendo is being used more and more by certain commentators to get around libel laws," he asserted. "It is not so much what is said as the way it is said that does the damage."

H. V. Kaltenborn Comments.

In New York, H. V. Kaltenborn, a founder and former president of the Association of Radio News Analysts, said he believed association members could stand comparison with Mr. Dies "on accuracy, judgment, taste or sensationalism."

"But I agree with Mr. Dies that the subject of an unfair personal attack on the air should be given a chance to reply," Mr. Kaltenborn added.

"The difficulty lies in deciding what is unfair and in establishing what constitutes a fair chance to reply. If Mr. Dies attacks a commentator on the House floor, a fair chance to reply might involve giving the commentator the privileges of the House floor, the publicity of the Congressional Record and the use of Mr. Dies' congressional frank to send out as many copies of the reply as Mr. Dies sent out of his attack."

Such a demand, he said, "might

be no more unreasonable than the demand of Mr. Dies to intrude upon a commentator's regular broadcast." Mr. Kaltenborn said he welcomed "the Winchell-Dies battle" in calling attention to the "knotty problem" of free speech on the air.

Winchell Anxious to Talk.

In Miami Beach, Fla., Walter Winchell said he had "been asking various members of Congress to be investigated for many years."

"They keep saying no," Mr. Winchell declared. "I would be very happy to tell these men to their faces things I have not been allowed to tell on the radio or in the newspapers."

"Dies is the kind of man who does not like any kind of criticism. Some time ago he asked Drew Pearson to please ask Winchell to lay off him. When I told Pearson to tell him to go to hell I expected him to use the Congressional Record to even matters."