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"THE AWAKENING"

Within the past two weeks the American public has begun to appreciate the New Deal's real challenge to constitutional rights and liberties. One of the New Deal's most partisan agencies -- the Senate Lobby Investigating Committee, headed by Senator Hugo L. Black of Alabama -- is responsible for this development.

Newspapers throughout the land, both Democratic and Republican, have been filled with editorial denunciation of the methods followed by the Black Committee in its effort to throttle the right of citizens to express themselves concerning the affairs of their government.

As set forth by Jouett Shouse, President of the American Liberty League, in his radio address of March 6th, it has been revealed that the Committee instigated the Federal Communications Commission to pervert the Commission's authority in order to open the files of the Western Union and Postal Telegraph companies in Washington to inspection by the Committee's agents. All messages sent to or from Washington during about ten months in 1935 were either examined or subject to examination. It made no difference what the telegrams were about. Many of them undoubtedly were messages between husband and wife relating to family affairs. Doubtless many more were communications between lawyers and their clients. Some probably contained medical advice given by physicians to their patients. They were all open to inspection by the Committee's agents.

No one outside of the Committee and its large corps of employees knows just what messages were copied. No one knows how many copies were made or to whom the extra copies, if any, were delivered.

The revelation of this action on the part of the Committee and its tool, the Communications Commission, has made it clear to the American people that the New Deal has no respect for constitutional rights. If the principle established in this case is allowed to stand unrebuked, a citizen may no longer have any confidence that his mail is not tampered with; that his telephone wires are not tapped; that dictaphones are not placed in his own home or office. Never since the days of the infamous Writs of Assistance, which did much to bring on the American revolution, has there been in the United States such an outrageous violation of human rights.

It should be remembered that there was not even the pretense of showing that the telegrams examined dealt with public questions or had anything remotely to do with what is usually known as lobbying. The Committee merely engaged in one of those "fishing expeditions" such as have been declared to be illegal by a decision of our highest court. It is well for all citizens to reflect that if this is possible in Washington it can be done also in every city and hamlet throughout the nation. The great mass of citizens who must resent such tactics would do well to notify their Senators and Representatives that they will not tolerate the continuation of such abuses of authority.