

# ROOSEVELT SCORES HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BORDER AIRBASE

**He Repudiates Views of Army  
Generals as Contrary to  
Government Policies.**

**STANDS BY OUR TREATIES**

**Unfortified Frontiers Will Re-  
main in Letter and Spirit  
of the Pacts, He Says.**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, April 30.—President Roosevelt censured the House Military Affairs Committee today for publishing secret testimony of army officers on the Wilcox Air Base Bill involving the United States' relations with Canada, repudiated the views of the officers as not in line with administration policies, and gave assurances that this government would observe in letter and spirit its treaties with Canada that have meant unfortified frontiers for a century.

Setting forth his views in a forceful letter to Chairman McSwain of the committee, the President asserted his prerogatives as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy and stated that if the committee persisted in publishing without reserve confidential testimony he would require officers of the armed services to obtain from him approval of their testimony in advance.

Without mentioning any specific treaty, the President emphasized the validity of the Rush-Bagot agreement of 1817 for demilitarizing the American lakes and declared that the United States expected to live up to the letter and spirit "of our treaties relating to the permanent disarmament of our three thousand miles of common boundary."

The views of the officers, he asserted, did not represent the policies, views, purposes or motives of the United States Government.

## **Censures Committee.**

Then, in a note of censure to the committee regarded as unprecedented, he said:

"It is necessary for me most respectfully to call to your attention and that of your committee the fact that if the testimony in executive session is printed in public documents in the same way as testimony in open session, I shall find it necessary as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy to require that in the future such testimony be given only after approval by me."

The President by letter informed Secretary Dern of his action and the Secretary of War in a reply expressed his concurrence.

Mr. Dern scarcely veiled the irritation felt in the War Department over the failure of the committee to observe its assurances of secrecy to the army witnesses, Brigadier Generals Charles E. Kilbourne and F. M. Andrews, and declared that they were expressing only their personal views. It was learned from other sources that the committee had not given the officers the customary opportunity of revising their remarks for publication.

## **Andrews Voiced Own Views.**

At the time of the hearings General Kilbourne was assistant chief of staff in charge of war plans. He is now on duty in the Philippines. General Andrews is head of the new General Headquarters Air Force. He conferred today with

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# ROOSEVELT SCORES HOUSE COMMITTEE

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General Douglas MacArthur, chief of staff, and later issued a statement in which he pointed to the secret character of the hearings and said that the views he had voiced were his own, given as an "abstract military study with no concrete political thought or reference" and never submitted to or discussed "with higher authority."

Chairman McSwain was out of the city and in his absence the committee made no statement, although some of its members attacked army and navy officers.

The President's letter is expected to reassure Canada, which yesterday inquired concerning the testimony with a view to possible representations. The State Department said it considered publication of the letter ample notification to Canada of the government's position.

## Camouflaged Provision in Bill.

In his testimony on the bill, which would establish a chain of strategic air corps bases along the coasts and borders of the country, General Kilbourne said that a "camouflaged" provision had been written in to provide for what was termed an "intermediate" air station near the Canadian border for transcontinental flights but that it meant the same as the six other strategic bases contemplated in the measure.

General Andrews said, that even with Canada neutral in a war, certain enemies would have bases available in Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad, British Honduras and the Lesser Antilles.

"If the situation is sufficiently vital to require it," he added, "we must be prepared to seize these outlying bases to prevent their development by the enemy as bases of operations against us."

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTERS.

President Roosevelt's letters to Secretary Dern and Chairman McSwain read:

The White House,  
Washington,  
April 29, 1935.

My Dear Mr. Secretary:

My attention has been called to "hearings before Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, on H. R. 6621 and

H. R. 4130." It is a matter of regret to me that I have been compelled to send a letter to Chairman McSwain of the Military Affairs Committee, copy of which I enclose.

Very sincerely,  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.  
Hon. George H. Dern,  
Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

The White House,  
Washington,  
April 29, 1935.

My dear Mr. Chairman:

My attention has been called to "hearings before Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, on H. R. 6621 and H. R. 4130." This public document includes apparently a full report of an executive session of the committee of which you are chairman.

It is necessary for me most respectfully to call to your attention and that of your committee the fact that if the testimony in executive session is printed in public documents in the same way as testimony in open session, I shall find it necessary as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy to require that in the future such testimony be given only after approval by me.

Referring to page 16 of this printed document, I desire to inform your committee that certain portions of the testimony of General Kilbourne, especially those relating to the Canadian border, do not represent either the policy of this administration or that of the Commander-in-Chief.

In the statement of General F.

M. Andrews, many portions of said statement, especially those relating to the territory of friendly nations, in Canada, in the Atlantic and in the West Indies, do not represent the policy of the administration or of the Commander-in-Chief.

I can go further and state that they do not reflect the views, purposes or motives of the United States Government. This government does not in any of its plans or policies envisage the possibility of a change in the friendly relationship between the United States and any foreign country.

I call your especial attention to the fact that this government not only accepts as an accomplished fact the permanent peace conditions cemented by many generations of friendship between the Canadian and American people, but expects to live up to not only the letter but the spirit of our treaties relating to the permanent disarmament of our three thousand miles of common boundary.

Very sincerely,  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.  
Hon. John J. McSwain,  
Chairman Military Affairs Committee,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, D. C.

## In Accord With Roosevelt.

Secretary Dern's reply to the President read:

April 30, 1935.

Dear Mr. President:

I am in entire accord with the letter dispatched by you on April 29th to the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee. In all fairness to the officers concerned, it was their understanding that the testimony was entirely secret and was not to be

made public under any circumstances.

I am sure they would not have expressed themselves so freely had they not had such an assurance of the situation. It is needless to say that their views on the points you mention were individual and had not been submitted to either the Chief of Staff or the Secretary of War. Their opinions thereon can be regarded only as personal ones.

I was myself considering taking similar action to the one so ably presented in your letter to the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, and I, therefore, cannot tell you how grateful I am that you anticipated me in this respect.

Very respectfully,  
GEORGE H. DERN,  
Secretary of War.

The President,  
The White House.

## Believed Testimony Secret.

The statement issued by General Andrews was as follows:

"In connection with the testimony I gave before the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, on H. R. 6621, and H. R. 4130, extracts of which have appeared recently in the public press, I wish to state that such testimony was given in executive session and with the full understanding and belief on my part that what I said before the committee was to be treated as secret.

"My testimony was never submitted to or discussed with authority and represents merely my own views as an abstract military study with no concrete political thought or reference."

Among members of the House Committee who commented on the President's letter were Representa-

tives Paul Kvale of Minnesota and Maury Maverick of Texas.

"I think it is unfortunate that government officials make statements provocative in nature and unwarranted," Mr. Kvale said. "I don't think any blame attaches to Chairman McSwain. If there is any culpability it is on the shoulders of army generals."

Representative Maverick declared that "about five admirals ought to be court-martialed for dabbling in foreign policy."

"I don't think the committee should be criticized for probably an unintentional error in letting the testimony get out about air bases and island seizure plans," he said. "But a lot of admirals and generals should keep their mouths shut and not talk about our foreign policy—purely up to the State Department and the President."