

January 2nd, 1941

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt rang me up from the White House this morning. She reminded me that at a Press Conference recently she had expressed the view that so far the U.S. had given nothing to England; ~~She told me that~~ ^{had} this brought her ~~in~~ various contributions intended for England: one artisan had sent a sum which he said represented one-tenth of his monthly salary and that ^{intended that} he intended to continue sending it; a French woman had sent her \$500, intended also I gather ^d for Britain's use, with the express stipulation that it should not be used to feed Europe! Altogether she now had in cheques about \$220. She was playing with the idea of referring to these donations in her column, and saying that she would be ready to accept money to help England's war effort. If so she felt that she should at the same time so word what she wrote that prospective donors could have no incorrect ideas as to the uses to which their money would be put; and she would also wish to feel sure that the uses were ones that our Government would approve of. She had, I think, some misgivings as to the propriety of what she had in mind, and asked for my advice generally.

I said that my belief was that what she proposed to do could not wholly be squared with the Neutrality Act but I asked time to consider the matter and said that I would then communicate with her again.

I think that we must draw Mrs. Roosevelt's/

velt's attention to the relevant provision of the Neutrality Act; and that we should also offer her advice as to what she should do with the money that comes into her as a result of her original statement. It will be a pity if we have to turn down help from this quarter and she might be ^{induced} ~~able~~ to say something ^{further} at some future press conference. *There is nothing like asking!*

I would welcome Mr. Malcolm's suggestions.

MB

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Unless we can be sure that Mrs R. will eventually be prosecuted (which will probably finish Section 8a of the Neutrality Act) I'm afraid we must in fairness draw her attention to it.

The money she has or gets she can send to us & we will see that the Exchequer gets it in the usual way.

As regards a further announcement in her column, she could say: "Section 8a of the Neutrality Act also, prevents me from receiving contributions for the British war chest and I have asked the British Embassy

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Embassy to dispose of those which have been sent spontaneously to me. If anyone wants to send any more, however, it is quite legal and proper for them to send a cheque to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in London."

But I'm not sure that it wouldn't be better to ask her to use the first sentence only of the foregoing: and tell her privately that when we have a Spitfire found in Canada she could be of great use in getting its existence known if she w^d refer to it as a news item deserving of comment.

Mr. Pincent says the
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thing of all that she wd
 do in this field wd be
 to get the President to
 make sure that Section 8a
 of the N. Act is repealed
 at the next session of
 Congress: but I have doubt
 about the propriety of
 suggesting this to Mr. R.
 I think a ^{public} reference to its
 absurdity & inconvenience
 wd be more useful in
 building up a public desire
 to see it repealed. It is
 Congress, not the President,
 that legislates.

Submit a ~~off~~ for
 consideration, bearing
 in mind that she may
 send it to the Sec. for
 the! An oral reply
 wd be better.

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