

# In Washington

## Waters Too Troubled for Diplomatic Ventures

By ARTHUR KROCK

WASHINGTON, May 13.—Last week William E. Borah warned the Senate and the country—speaking, contrary to custom, from manuscript to make his warning more impressive—that advocates of fascism are moving subtly and incessantly to transform to their favored mold the government of the United States. This week was published a letter written by Ambassador William E. Dodd to Senators, repeating a tale he had heard that an American "billionaire" was ready to install a dictator in this country.

Upon the publication of this letter Mr. Borah said he had "an idea it was the figment of a disturbed mind" and joined his to the expressed indignation of other Senators opposed to the President's Court Bill which our Ambassador to Berlin was defending. Some of these Senators want Mr. Dodd recalled.

There is a fair and usual amount of inconsistency in Mr. Borah's attack upon Mr. Dodd's entertainment of the billionaire-dictator tale, since in general it points to the same objective which the Senator said last week many in the United States are subtly seeking to attain. But that inconsistency does not bear in any way on the two chief reasons why the Ambassador's letter evoked much Congressional anger and demands for recalls, investigations, &c.

These reasons are: (1) Mr. Dodd, as a diplomatic representative of the government abroad is traditionally supposed to keep out of a controversy raging among its three branches; and (2) this particular controversy has split the party that controls the Senate and the executive department which jointly create Ambassadors.

### The Historian Uppermost

Persons acquainted with Mr. Dodd realize that, in his own view, he was probably divesting himself temporarily of his diplomatic status and writing as historian, defender of Jefferson and critic of Marshall, and firm believer in the Jeffersonian heritage of Franklin D. Roosevelt. But that will not save him from the wrath of Senators who have gone far out on the political limb in the Supreme Court issue, and resent the intrusion in their battle with the President of any one who, for any official reason, is expected to keep still. That expectation, under the circumstances, definitely includes men in Mr. Dodd's position.

For a long time the important American diplomatic appointments have been largely political, and the fealty of the appointees to the dispensing source in the White House has been an understood thing. Ambassadors and Ministers are tolerated as campaign speakers. Even the conventional John W. Davis, then our representative at the Court of St. James, stumped stately for James M. Cox in 1920.

But in a campaign a party is generally a unit, and the issues are general. The Senate Democrats are not now a unit on the Court Bill, and the issue is specific. Also, before an Ambassador can go to his post he must be confirmed by the Senate, and Mr. Dodd's epistolary appeal was directed against positions assumed by many from whom he in part derives his mission to Germany. A Senator, on the contrary, is responsible only to his special electorate.

### Mr. Dodd and the Department

These are some of the reasons why, when Mr. Dodd warned of fascism in urging support of the President's program, Mr. Borah (who had uttered the same warning without coming to a similar legislative conclusion) and other Senators attacked him. Though this attack lends no consistency to the Borah remark about "a disturbed mind," that is beside the point.

What follows touches a delicate subject, but it seems the moment to say that the State Department was not particularly surprised when Mr. Dodd got into trouble with the Senate. He has long been one of the department's worries. He has impressed his diplomatic associates as a man who is inclined to forget his responsibilities as an envoy in his zeal as a historian and in his views as a contemporary observer of governing trends. For these impulses the department is disposed to award Mr. Dodd full credit as a man. But it is no secret in those generally discreet corridors that a change at Berlin has long been desired and would be welcomed at any time. This latest incident merely supports officials who have made known their views on the subject to the President and Secretary Hull.

Looking at his letter from Mr. Dodd's standpoint, it is easy to understand how he came to write it. He is one of the deepest searchers into the recurrent struggles between American Presidents on the one hand and the Supreme Court and Congress on the other. From his studies he is convinced that Marshall tried to wreck Jefferson's popular institutions, and pretty well did so. He has previously lamented that the Senate wrecked Wilson's international aspiration and with it much of the world's progress toward peace. Now seeing what appears to him a similar effort, the historian engulfed what little there is of the diplomat in him. How Ambassador Bowers has refrained from doing the same suggests a miracle of self-control. But maybe Mr. Bowers chose his correspondents with more care.