

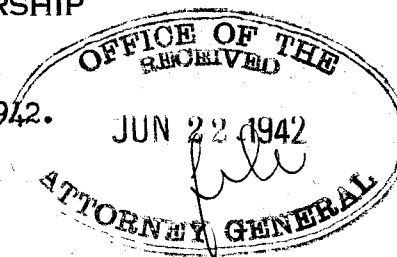
THE DIRECTOR OF CENSORSHIP

WASHINGTON

June 20, 1942.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable Francis Biddle,
Attorney General of the United States,
Washington, D. C.



My dear Mr. Attorney General:

Upon receipt today of your letter of June 19 enclosing the memorandum from Mr. Mitchell I telephoned your office and made an appointment to see you on Tuesday next, the earliest date upon which you would be available.

The situation regarding the revised newspaper Code is this: After clearance with all of the interested Government departments including the Department of Justice, this Code has been printed and was just on the point of distribution when your letter arrived. I have given instructions that its distribution be held up pending my talk with you on the three points mentioned.

We did not include in the revision a paragraph saying that correspondents who have been in combat zones must submit resulting articles to the Army or Navy before publication. Such a stipulation seemed unnecessary for two reasons. First of all, when a correspondent makes a commitment to the Army or Navy, it seems superfluous to state that he must honor his commitment. Secondly, it has been our invariable practice under such circumstances to refer the matter immediately to the Army or Navy for decision. The trouble in the Chicago Tribune case was that the Navy neglected to extract such a commitment from the Tribune correspondent. Our practice is so well established, however, that even so we would have referred the dispatch in question to the Navy had it been submitted to us. We did so refer other dispatches written by the same correspondent.

The new Code contains a stipulation against publishing information about the identity or location of enemy naval or merchant vessels in any waters except as officially announced.

I am not sure of the intent or implication of the final paragraph of your letter. Your suggestion appeals to me as most important, however, since it might indicate that we are crossing the bridge from voluntary to involuntary censorship, in which case I suggest that the entire Code would have to take a completely different form.

Naturally I will be happy to discuss all of these questions with you and I am writing this merely for the information of your office during the interim.

Sincerely yours,

Byron Price
Byron Price,
Director.

~~RECORDED~~

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