

Celler Demands Data On Prisoner Atrocities

Also Asks Speedup in Punishment Of War Criminals



Rep. Emanuel Celler

By CHARLES A. MICHIE

PM's Bureau

WASHINGTON, Apr. 25.—Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N. Y.) demanded to know today if the International Red Cross was aware of atrocious conditions in Nazi prison camps—and if not, why not.

“In accordance with the conditions of the Geneva Convention, the Red Cross has the right to visit prisoner-of-war camps,” he said. “These killings, starvations, and abuses did not happen in one day. They were prolonged operations. Didn’t the Red Cross know about them?”

If the Red Cross did not know about the atrocities being perpetrated in prison camps within the Reich, Celler asked “Aren’t we justified in charging dereliction?”

And he queried further, if Red Cross officials did know about conditions under which United Nations prisoners were living, to whom did they reveal their knowledge?

Who Was Told?

“Who was told?” he demanded. “The State Dept.? The War Dept.? Assuredly we, Congress, were not told about them.”

He went on to ask what the State Dept. had done to accelerate action on the trial and punishment of war criminals. He wanted to know if the State Dept. has as yet accepted officially any of the recommendations of the United War Crimes Commission.

“Haven’t the people and the Congress the right to know who is responsible for this silence?” he questioned. “What is so sacrosanct about the subject that matters of policy are kept in the dark—that members of Congress are met with stony-faced silence when requests are made for information and action?”

Mothers Want Reply

Celler pointed out that mothers of these prisoners of war which were murdered or tortured by the Nazis had been led to believe that their sons were being treated by Nazis in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention. He asked what "we members of Congress can say to them now? Can we tell them politely to see the nearest Red Cross official or go to the nearest State Dept. representative?"

Celler commended Gen. Eisenhower's action in inviting members of Congress to view the scenes of Nazi "fiendishness" which he said was a very good attempt to prod deeper into these revelations of atrocities.

Not all members of Senate and House are as pleased as Celler that a round dozen Congressmen—six from the House and six from the Senate—were invited by Gen. Eisenhower and the War Dept. to fly to Europe.

The status of the six Senators, who are in the group, was raised in the Senate and some nasty remarks were passed. It appears today that the six Senators, headed by Majority Leader Alben W. Barkley (D., Ky.), will not be considered official representatives of the U. S. Senate.

Truth to tell, some of the Senators who were left behind are piqued because they didn't rate an invitation. When informed that the War Dept. had picked the party, Sens. George D. Aiken (R., Vt.), Wayne Morse (R., Ore.), and Forest C. Donnell (R., Mo.), all Republicans, asked to know what right the War Dept. had to "impose its will in selection of Senate committees."

Meanwhile, the House Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday approved a resolution for U. S. participation in locating war criminals and bringing them to trial no matter where they try to hide out. It rejected an amendment of Rep. Daniel J. Flood (D., Pa.) that it be the intent of Congress that a Joint House and Senate Committee be empowered to determine compliance of neutral countries in not sheltering enemy war criminals. Also voted down was a resolution by Rep. Celler providing for a commission to co-operate on treatment of war criminals with other United Nations.

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