

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

APRIL 3, 1933

Section 2 of House Resolution 4220, which is understood to have passed the House this afternoon, was suggested by the Department of State for the purpose of protecting our diplomatic codes and to make possible the prosecution of any person guilty of tampering with them.

The first half of the bill is desired by other Departments to prevent the sale of documents coming into the possession of employees of the Government. The bill in effect is an amendment to House Res. 11057 which was introduced in the House of Representatives on April 1, 1932, at the instance of other Departments of the Government.

The bill is in no wise intended as a muzzle or censorship of the press.

Report No. 1098 of the House of Representatives, 72d Congress, 1st Session, contains an extract of a letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary dated March 16, 1932:

"In 1930 we had the unfortunate experience of having an employee of this department sell for \$12,000 to a New York newspaper a distortion of certain records upon which he had been asked to make a report to the Secretary. As you know, the records of this department include transactions involving oil, gas, Indian matters, construction contracts, etc., aggregating many millions of dollars each year, as well as the records in a large number of disputes adjudicated by the Land Office each year, some of them involving the United States as a party. Public interest requires that such records be protected. There is no remedy at present other than dismissal of the employee for sale of such material. This bill would correct that situation."
