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Forma 291-5. M. L. F.

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**AIR MAIL**

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May 27, 1952.  
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File: Messersmith						

Dear Dannie :

I saw in the local paper "Excelsior" this morning an INS dispatch from Washington which says that President Truman had threatened on May 26 to make an investigation of the private electricity monopoly in the U.S. through the Department of Justice in order to determine whether this "monopoly" is violating the law on improper procedures. The article goes on to say that the President had stated that the electricity companies were carrying on two sets of books, one for the payment of taxes and the other for the basis of the calculations of their tariffs. According to the dispatch, the President had also said that the electricity monopoly was making a propaganda campaign from which it appeared that they had taken a leaf out of the book of Hitler, Stalin, and Marx. The dispatch goes on to say further that the President said "I think that I am going to ask the Attorney General to make a study of the situation to see whether the law against corrupt procedures is applicable or not". The dispatch closes stating that the President had said that he did not oppose himself to the electricity companies receiving reasonable profits, but that it was a question of seeing that the public was not robbed. This is one of a series of statements which the President has made with regard to the private electricity industry in the U.S., for which I can see no foundation, and I cannot see what he is after. I think the only thing amusing about this dispatch is that the President said the electricity companies have been taking a leaf out of the book of Hitler, Stalin, and Marx. It seems to me that he is doing that.

Truman seems to have developed the same sort of hate with regard to the electricity industry that Roosevelt developed against some of the holding companies. All this sort of talk by Truman, for he is still President of the U.S., does not help the electricity industry anywhere, and it is the sort of thing which is disconcerting in these countries of Latin America

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where private enterprise is under such constant attack, particularly in recent years, and where it has had sufficient blows without having to receive any from the President of the U. S. Who it is in the presidential entourage who is pushing him on to this, I do not know, but it must be one of his advisers who has a strong hate against the electricity companies. How much politics there is in it, I do not know either.

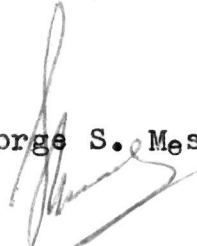
I suppose that something of this must have appeared in the New York papers, so you will have probably a more full report available on these statements of Truman's than what we got through this dispatch published in EXCELSIOR.

You may have seen David Lawrence's column "Covering the News" for April 10. This particular column was headed "Industrial Confiscation" and was really excellent. It gives the background of some of these ideas of Truman, and their essential danger to our economy as well as to that of other countries.

I am, with all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith.



GSM/go