re. HOBSON

December 30,1925.

MEMORANDUM for the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, concerning the activity of the International Narcotic Education Association and its President, Richard P.Hobson:

Sometime in May ,1924 Mr.Hobson visited the Public Health Service Bureau and sought to enlist the aid of the Service in his activities. He was at that time interested in having Congress print and distribute throughout the country fifty million copies of an article written by him entitled "The Peril of Narcotics- A Warning."

Mr.Hobson also interviewed members of the Federal Narcotics Control Board and Surgeon Lawrence Kolb, who had been directed by me to make a study of narcotic drug addiction. So far as I am aware Mr.Hobson received no encouragement from any of these official sources.

The International Narcotic Education Association had previously come to the attention of the Public Health Service through alarming reports as to narcotic drug addiction that this organization had by one means or another spread throughout the country.

It was near the time of Hobson's visit to the Bureau that the Police Commissioner of New York City publicly denounced the association for disseminating what he characterized as false and malicious propaganda concerning the prevalence of drug addiction among the school children of New York City. This outburst was occasioned by a crusade carried on in New York by Mr.Hobson in which he made the claim that there were seventeen thousand heroin addicts among the school children of one borough of the City. An investigation made by the police and school authorities of the City failed to disclose one addict among its nine hundred and fifty-one thousand school children.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 10 provided for the publication and distribution of Hobson's article above referred to. Hearings were held on this resolution before the Senate Committee on Printing on June 5,1924. The Federal Narcotics Control Board sent a letter in opposition to the publication of the article on the ground that

it was erroneous and Mr.Edwin L.Neville of the State Department, and a member of the Board, who had represented the United States on opium committees sent abroad with Mr.Porter, appeared and gave testimony that certain statements in the article were erroneous. Doctor Kolb appeared for the Public Health Service and pointed out numerous absurd exaggerations in the article, and the Chairman of the Committee wrote me a letter later on expressing thanks for his "striking statement". It was brought out in the Hearings that the publication of the article as proposed would have cost about $330,000.

The Public Health Service issued a report in May,1924, shortly before the Committee hearings were held, in which it was clearly shown that narcotic drug addiction in the United States was not as serious a problem as some people had supposed it to be. The conclusions of this report were in complete variance with Mr.Hobson's contentions.

After Congress adjourned Mr.Hobson wrote letters to the Secretary of the Treasury, to the President's Secretary, Bascom C.Slemp, and to me in which he attempted to discredit L.G.Hutt, Chief of the Narcotic Division, Mr.Neville and Surgeon Kolb. The idea he attempted to convey in these letters was that a moral wrong was being done by these three parties in opposing his efforts to save the world from narcotic drug addiction, and that Doctor Kolb was the leader of them. No encouragement was given to Mr.Hobson by anyone to whom the letters were written.

In a letter addressed to certain executives of the American Medical Association, in which the report of the Public Health Service and Surgeon Kolb were attacked, it is stated by Mr.Hobson that he requested the aid of the Public Health Service to check up the statements and figures in his article. There is in this statement an intimation that he was led to believe that the Service would not oppose it. However, the published hearings on Senate Concurrent Resolution 10 show that Mr.Hobson attempted to discredit Surgeon Kolb's testimony before it was given. It would appear from this that he knew that the Service would not endorse the statements in his article.

When Congress reassembled Mr.Hobson sought the support of the Service for a revised article, copies of which he had sent to physicians and others throughout the United States together with a circular letter in which he urged them to write the Senators and Congressmen and to have their branch of the American Medical Association adopt resolutions endorsing the bill. The American Medical Association had previously severely condemned the International Narcotic Education Association in an editorial.

In the above mentioned circular, dated December 10,1924, the following statement is made: "The Public Health Service and the Narcotic Division are helping us to make the final changes to complete the

document, and we anticipate no opposition, hoping to realize the passage of the resolution at this session, unless the calendar becomes too congested."

Any uninformed person reading this statement would be led to infer that the two Services mentioned considered his campaign a meritorious one and were desirous for Congress to support it. This is rather a remarkable inference for Mr.Hobson to attempt to give in the face of his attack upon certain officials of these Services who, in the course of their official duties, had given information to the Senate committee controverting his contentions.

Another instance in which Mr.Hobson apparently attempts to mislead by saying through inference what he avoids saying directly, is furnished by the extracts quoted below from a letter sent to Major R.A.Haynes, a copy of which was also sent to me in an effort to enlist my support for the revised article. It appears that a letter had been written by the Prohibition Commissioner to Mr.Hobson taking exception to ~~his~~ statement in his article that one ounce of heroin would create two thousand addicts. The extract is as follows:

> "About the number of addicts that may be created with an ounce of heroin, I have inquired of several doctors, since the last session, including Alexander Lambert and Carlton Simon of New York. While such execution is not probable, the figures used are regarded in the case of youth as being possible."

The inference that Lambert and Simon agreed with him is intereseting in view of the following. In a letter dated December 20,1924 Dr.Lambert has among other things this to say:

> "I refused to review this (referring to the article) for Mr.Hobson. I talked with him one day at dinner, when some friends asked me to meet him, and refused to go on his committee of review.
>
> "The statement that one ounce of heroin would make two thousand addicts, is equivalent to saying that one-quarter of a grain of heroin would make an addict. There is no justification for such a statement in any way.
>
> "Hobson's document handed to me by his secretary as being the document in question, is so full of inaccuracies that it would be a misfortune to have it broadcasted and published by Congress.
>
> "You may use this letter as you see fit, I have already said the equivalent to Mr.Hobson's secretary."

Doctor Lambert also sent an adverse criticism of the article that he had prepared for some one connected with the Commonwealth fund. It appears that Mr.Hobson had sought financial support for his organization from this fund, and the parties handling it had asked advice from Lambert who is a well known authority on drug addiction.

Doctor Simon is Deputy Police Commissioner in Charge of the Narcotic Division of New York City. He is responsible for the statement that there are no addicts among the nine hundred and fifty-one thousand school children of New York. Simon also heads the International Narcotic Criminal Identification Bureau, and he says that the records of this bureau covering seven hundred cities and twenty-seven nations do not contain the record of a single child user of narcotics. It seems unlikely therefore that he would endorse the statement that one ounce of heroin will create two thousand addicts. The fact is that a search of medical literature has failed to show anything that would lend support to any such contention.

In a letter dated January 8,1925 I pointed out to Mr.Hobson that the data in his article were misleading. The Committee on Printing did not hold any hearings on it during the past session of Congress but it was published in the Congressional Record as an extension of remarks by Representative Walter F.Lineberger of California, and copies were sent to various persons throughout the country including physicians, superintendents of education and superintendents of schools. Accompanying the article was a copy of a proposed Congressional Resolution calling for a world conference on narcotic education to meet in Philadelphia the third of June,1926, and authorizing the President of the International Narcotic Education Association to appoint committees, etc. to carry out the provisions of the resolution.

The circular signed by Mr.Lineberger asked for replies and the address given was 4315½ Second Street, Los Angeles, California. This was the address of the International Narcotic Education Association.

The National Information Bureau, an organization whose expressed purpose is to protect the contributing public, registers those social agencies that are found upon investigation to be satisfactory. This organization refused to register the International Narcotic Education Association. This action was taken on October 10,1924. On October 25 the assistant director of the National Information Bureau wrote to Prohibition Commissioner Roy A.Haynes, stating that Captain Richard P.Hobson had recently informed them that the Treasury Department was cooperating fully with his organization. The Secretary of the Treasury replied to this letter calling attention to certain reports of the

Public Health Service that controverted the contentions made by Mr.Hobson's association. He also referred to the attacks made by the association on the three government agencies dealing with narcotic addiction, and said that this would seem to show that there is no very close cooperation between it and the Government Services.

The information that the International Narcotic Education Association releases to the public is apparently gotten almost exclusively from sensational newspaper reports. Reliable literature is ignored except where some one has made an honest mistake that happens to support some contention made by the association. For instance the Treasury Report of 1918 is repeatedly referred to as authority for the statement that the per capita consumption of opium in the United States is thirty-six grains, and that of certain European countries one, two or three grains. Everyone who has studied the narcotic situation knows that this statement was incorrect when it was first published and that at present the per capita consumption in the United States is about the same or less than it is in a number of European countries and in Canada and Australia. The figures as to this have been published and Mr.Neville brought the facts out in the presence of Mr.Hobson in his testimony on Concurrent Resolution 10. In spite of this a number of newspaper and magazine articles sponsored by Mr.Hobson appeared later on showing the disparity as published in the Treasury report.

Repeated publication in the United States of this misleading statement apparently embarrassed our delegates to the last opium conference held in Geneva. The repetition of it by Lord Cecil, the head of the British Delegation, caused a tilt between him and Mr.Porter, who pointed out the erroneous nature of it.

Some of the important erroneous contentions of Mr.Hobson are that there are one million or more addicts in the United States, that addiction is rapidly increasing, that heroin is being made synthetically from coal tar products, that heroin addiction is sweeping through the schools of the country, and that the country is in imminent peril from a growing narcotic menace.

The addiction of and danger to school children is strongly stressed by Mr.Hobson in all of his publications I have seen. The Narcotic Division has investigated numerous reports about this in different parts of the country and has found only two addicted children and these were Mexicans living in Texas near the Border. The investigation carried on by the Narcotic Division included the public schools in districts containing about one-half the population of the State of California, in which state Hobson had reported that addiction existed to an alarming extent among school children. School

and police officials and judges who were interviewed knew of no such addiction, and had either not heard that any addiction was suspected of being present or had heard of it only through reports given out by Mr.Hobson or through an occasional sensational newspaper article.

Mr.Hobson's exaggeration about the addiction of school children and the actual facts are here discussed in order to illustrate the lack of reliability of his contentions in general. It is not considered necessary to take up and discuss in detail other things that he claims about drug addiction.

There is quoted below an extract from a letter to Doctor Kolb from an employee of the International Narcotic Education Association, Mrs.Mary D.Bronson. Mrs.Bronson wrote from Glendale,California May 17,1925. She was then no longer connected with the association and was suing or threatening to sue for unpaid salary. Her motive in writing this letter was probably revenge and the quotation should be read with this possibility in mind. The quotation follows:

> "I ran across a financial report marked 'confidential' from the bookkeeper of the I.N.E.A. to Hobson. Now the latter always states that only 14% of the income goes for overhead. Yet this report shows that the income last year was $52,000 in round numbers and that salaries amounted to $30,000, of which amount Hobson received $20,000.*****Also, a copy of a letter to this same manager, says that if he can get fifty men, or thirty men even, to give one thousand dollars a year for five years he will be all right. For by that time Judge Gower will be dead and then the association will inherit upwards of $350,000 and he adds 'I am the association.' Unfortunately, this is only the carbon copy of the letter and therefore not signed but the report on finance is signed."

Mr.Hobson makes the following statement on page fifty-six of the Hearing on Concurrent Resolution 10:

> "The executive officers are serving at a financial sacrifice reaching as low as 30 per cent of the market value of their services. The overhead at the last calculation was below 14 per cent."

H.S.Cumming,
Surgeon General.