

CONGRESS STIRRED UP BY BOALT'S STORY AND OTHER ACTS OF LYNCH LAW AT VERA CRUZ

BY GILSON GARDNER

Washington, D. C., July 16.—A searching congressional investigation is now seriously threatened as a result of the story told Correspondent, Fred L. Boalt that marines shot down unarmed prisoners during the taking of Vera Cruz. The Falconer resolution in the house has taken the lid off and Senator Poindexter is on the trail in the senate, where the chance for action is not so much hampered by parliamentary difficulties.

What congressmen want to know is, whether even a little threat of war like the Vera Cruz incident turns our soldiers into barbarians and repeals the ordinary laws of civilized warfare.

That the navy officers holding the court of inquiry at Vera Cruz are apt to do all in their power to save the honor of the service is taken for granted. This is the principal reason for the demand for action by congress.

The real charge is one which reflects on the military service as a whole and it can hardly be fairly tried by these branches themselves, particularly when these branches furnish judge, jury, witnesses and prosecuting officers.

The spirit of the service is indicated in the original order for Boalt's deportation without a hearing. There would not have been even a court of inquiry had not Secretary of the Navy Daniels interposed his cable orders. Daniels is a newspaper man, has been one all his life and he knows what it means to publish unpleasant truths about the powers that be and sometimes suffering unpleasant consequences.

While running his North Carolina paper not many years ago, Daniels published the facts about a railroad and ended by calling it "A receiver-ship steal." The judge who had appointed the receiver hauled Daniels before him, adjudged him in con-

tempt of court, and ordered him to pay a fine of \$2,500. Daniels told the judge he would live and die in jail before he would pay a cent of it, and the judge never dared send him to jail, and the fine was never paid.

Daniels is the kind of man therefore to see the point of backing up a newspaper man whose only purpose is to tell the truth, even when it is unpleasant.

Since the publication of Boalt's charges other stories have been floating around which make congressmen even more anxious to have this investigation. For instance, there is a story in Washington attributed to Staff Photographer Weigle of the Chicago Tribune to the effect that a Mexican was summarily executed by the American forces following the taking of Vera Cruz on a charge that he had made an attack on an American woman.

The newspaper correspondents at Vera Cruz, according to this story, were permitted to witness the execution on condition that they should say nothing about the affair in their dispatches.

Senators and congressmen who want an investigation do not particularly care for the arbitrary orders of Secretary Garrison in the matter of press censorship over news pertaining to the American occupation of Vera Cruz. In fact, Congressman Falconer's investigation calls on Garrison to advise the house whether or not this censorship is now in operation covering news of the testimony being given at the court of inquiry now being held on the battleship Texas at Vera Cruz.

Officials here do not understand why there should be any censorship at the present time. Censorship is a war measure. War never has been declared with Mexico and President Wilson has repeatedly asserted that the present status is not one of war,