

COOLIDGE WOULD END TAX PUBLICITY

The President, It Is Announced,
Favors Repeal in the Short
Session of Congress.

MESSAGE MAY URGE ACTION

Many Democrats in House and
Senate Are Expected to Change as
Result of Public Protests.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21.—President Coolidge is hopeful that Congress will repeal the publicity features of the income tax law, a spokesman announced today. It was stated further that the President, who regards the publicity of income tax returns as violative of private rights and possibly unconstitutional, would be glad to see a repeal bill passed in the coming session.

Administration officials concerned with income tax questions are of the opinion that the President may discuss tax publicity in his message to Congress. They believe that if he makes a strong recommendation for repeal at this time Congress would follow his lead.

At least one Democratic leader, Senator Harrison of Mississippi, who supported tax publicity, is now out for repeal, and it is understood that protests made by people all over the United States against publicity have had the effect of converting other members of the House and the Senate.

In a statement issued by President Coolidge when he signed the Revenue bill on June 2, the President sharply criticized the publicity provisions. He indicated then that they should be repealed at the earliest possible moment, and declared that the law as a whole had been dictated by political expediency. He expressed the hope that "a bill less political and truly more economic" might be passed at the next session.

The Administration spokesman who today discussed the President's attitude said that Mr. Coolidge would stand on the comment he made on the subject then. In discussing the publicity features of the new law then, the President said:

"Our institutions guarantee to our citizens sanctity in their private affairs, a right giving way only to the need of Government. Under the law as it now exists the Treasury has access to all information useful in determining the liability of the taxpayer. For the needs of revenue publicity is unnecessary. While the bill purports not to give full publicity this is scarcely true, and if still sacrifices without reason the rights of the taxpayer.

"In each post office the amount which the citizen contributes to the Treasury must be exhibited to the curious and to the taxpayer's business rival. Committees of Congress have access to returns and other private papers, without any restriction as to their publication in open committee or on the floor of Congress, the most certain means of publicity.

"If a taxpayer desires a hearing before the Board of Tax Appeals he must expose to the public the complete details of his income. To put this price upon the fair determination of tax liability in its regular administrative course is entirely unjustifiable. Yet, such is done in the publicity provisions of the Board of Tax Appeals.

"It is not alone in the unwarranted interference with the rights of the citizen to privacy that these provisions are hurtful. It is believed that far from increasing revenue the desire to avoid the gratification of the idle curiosity of others or the exposure of one's personal affairs to one's competitor will result in the concealment of millions of dollars of income which would otherwise be reported. This means a change in the fundamental policy of our laws, violative of private rights and harmful to Government revenues."

Members of Congress who are arriving here for the December session are almost unanimous in the view that consideration will be given this Winter to bills dealing with tax publicity. They are hopeful that the subject will be discussed in the President's message. They report a very general hostility among the people to the provisions of the law and the indications are that numerous repeal bills will be offered in both the House and the Senate.