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See Disturbing Trend

Latin Editors' Attention Focuses on Press in U.S.

By JULES DUBOIS
Chicago Tribune, Press Service

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica; — At the Inter-American Press Association mid-year meeting here, Latin American editors found the tables reversed.

For the first time in 15 years, the main theme of an IAPA meeting spotlighted the U.S. In the past, the spotlight was on press problems of Latin America.

This does not mean that what is happening in the rest of the hemisphere was ignored. On the contrary. But the Latin editors here, as well as U.S. editors and publishers, were most seriously concerned with the growing trend to throttle the press in the great democracy of the north.

They fear that it will have a most detrimental chain reaction in their own countries.

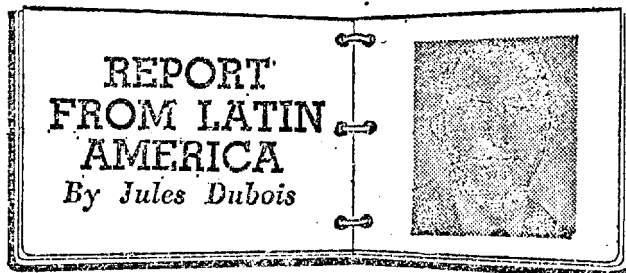
This is because there are Latin American politicians who justify any action against the press.

A resolution that emerged from the committee on freedom of the press was drafted by a sub-committee that was presided over by Dr. Manuel Cisneros, former prime minister and former foreign minister of Peru. Dr. Cisneros is the editor of La Cronica of Lima.

The board of directors unanimously approved resolutions to keep the press free and not hinder its right to inform.

The IAPA has been credited with contributing towards the improvement of the standard of journalism in Latin America both in the production field as well as in the editorial field.

One element of surprise among Latin editors was noted. This was that Sen. Wayne Morse (D., Ore.) had reintroduced his 1963 bill to curb press reporting of criminal trials. They were bewildered that the chairman of the sub-committee on inter-American affairs of the Senate would introduce such a bill. They said they would follow with interest the Sen-



ate hearings which are scheduled to open Monday because of the danger to their own countries where the press is free.

The Chileans especially have been faced with similar dangers. A year ago a 1925 law decreed on abuses of publicity was enacted that forbade the publication of news of a crime until authorized by a judge and limited stories to 500 words and a three-column headline. Some editors, who thought such a law necessary to check the excesses of a yellow and blackmail type of journalism in their countries, had a change of heart when they were concerned.

President Edouard Frei's minister of justice promised

to revoke that law but it has not yet been done. What did happen is that the Chilean congress passed in the record time of five minutes an amnesty law that pardoned all editors who were charged with violating the provisions of the criminal reporting statute.

The IAPA stands ready under its president, Pedro G. Beltram, another former prime minister of Peru and editor of La Prensa of Lima, to support every publishing and editorial association in the U.S. on this issue. The IAPA has recommended a common sense approach that will serve to insure the preservation of an unblemished record in the exercise of freedom of the press in the U.S.