

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement by the American Commission
for the Protection and Salvage of
Artistic and Historic Monuments in
War Areas, Owen J. Roberts, Chairman.

WASHINGTON, JUNE 10, 1946: Former Justice Owen J. Roberts, Chairman of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, issued a statement today, on behalf of the Commission, strongly condemning the action of Dr. Frederick M. Clapp, Director of the Frick Collection, New York, Mrs. Juliana Force, Director of the Whitney Museum, New York, and others who have called in question the good faith of the United States Government in bringing to this country some 200 paintings from German museums for safe-keeping until conditions in Germany warrant their return. Justice Roberts' statement was unanimously approved by all other members of the Commission, including Cardinal Spellman; former Governor Herbert H. Lehman; David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art; Francis Henry Taylor, Director of the Metropolitan Museum, New York; Dr. Paul J. Sachs, of Harvard University; Huntington Cairns of the National Gallery of Art; and Dr. William Bell Dinsmoor, of Columbia University, New York.

Justice Roberts said: "The members of the Commission have received copies of a resolution signed by Dr. Frederick M. Clapp, Director of the Frick Collection; Mrs. Juliana Force, Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and others who criticize the action of the United States Government, taken at the Direction of the President and the United States Army Command in Germany, in bringing to this country certain paintings from German museums for

safekeeping until conditions in Germany warrant their return. The Clapp resolution compares the action taken by the United States Government to looting operations carried on by the Nazis during the war.

"The Commission has also noted the statements issued by the White House on September 26, 1945, and by the War Department on December 6, 1945, that the works of art of bona fide German ownership, which may be brought to this country for safekeeping, will be kept in trust for the German people and will be returned to Germany when conditions there warrant.

" The Commission has also noted the statement issued by the late Chief Justice Stone, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, on December 14, 1945, that the Trustees of the National Gallery, at the request of the Secretary of State, had agreed to arrange for the storage space for such paintings as might be brought to this country by the United States Army for safekeeping, and that he felt the Army 'deserved the highest praise for the care exercised in salvaging these great works of art and in making provision for their safety until they can be returned to Germany.'

" The Commission accepts without reservation the promise of the United States Government, as voiced by its highest officials, that the works of art belonging to German museums and brought to this country for safekeeping, will be returned to Germany when conditions there warrant.

"The Commission is strongly of the opinion that the resolution sponsored by Dr. Clapp, Mrs. Force, and others is without justification and is to be deplored."

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