

EXCERPT FROM THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DATED

APRIL 29, 1938

(b) Bank Holding Companies

It is hardly necessary to point out the great economic power that might be wielded by a group which may succeed in acquiring domination over banking resources in any considerable area of the country. That power becomes particularly dangerous when it is exercised from a distance and notably so when effective control is maintained without the responsibilities of complete ownership.

We have seen the multiplied evils which have arisen from the holding company system in the case of public utilities, where a small minority ownership has been able to dominate a far-flung system.

We do not want those evils repeated in the banking field, and we should take steps now to see that they are not.

It is not a sufficient assurance against the future to say that no great evil has yet resulted from holding company operations in this field. The possibilities of great harm are inherent in the situation.

I recommend that the Congress enact at this session legislation that will effectively control the operation of bank holding companies; prevent holding companies from acquiring control of any more banks, directly or indirectly; prevent banks controlled by holding companies from establishing any more branches; and make it illegal for a holding company, or any corporation or enterprise in which it is financially interested, to borrow from or sell securities to a bank in which it holds stock.

I recommend that this bank legislation make provision for the gradual separation of banks from holding company control or ownership, allowing a reasonable time for this accomplishment - time enough for it to be done in an orderly manner and without causing inconvenience to communities served by holding company banks.