

Calvin Coolidge Says:

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NORTHAMPTON, Mass., Jan. 31.—The episode involving General Butler illustrates one of the peculiarities of our military organization. It is very difficult to regulate the speech of our officers. The public usually assumes that the right of free speech is universal and without control. So such breaches of discipline are usually ignored. But such a freedom does not exist in the case of officers, since they are voluntarily in a service where the right to talk is necessarily limited.

The ease with which gossip concerning persons in important public positions finds credence is also remarkable. The most trivial incident is passed around and magnified until it becomes a serious accusation. The victims are usually without remedy. When anything of that kind occurs with reference to the officers of a foreign government it is especially reprehensible, because it would be none of our concern even if it were true and because its repetition is very injurious to the friendly relations of the innocent people of the two countries. There are good things enough in the world and good traits enough in all persons to supply about all the topics needed for discussion. International good will should not be imperiled by inconsiderate statements from any source.

CALVIN COOLIDGE