

In his most recent article Congressman Dies says, "Insofar as Mrs. Perkins is concerned her file on the Bridges case reveals a failure to enforce the mandatory provisions of the law with reference to the deportation of Communist aliens."

The decision of the trial examiner in the Bridges case, dated December 27, 1939, is that the "evidence does not permit the finding that Harry R. Bridges is a member of the Communist Party or is affiliated with that party." etc.

Perhaps this discrepancy between the analysis of the impartial trial examiner and the statement of Congressman Dies is in part explained by the criticism of the witnesses by the trial examiner in commenting upon their testimony. Probably the outstanding witness heard by Congressman Dies in this connection was Harper Knowles, who professed to represent the American Legion and the Associated Farmers, both of whom denied that he represented them. Concerning Mr. Knowles the Department of Labor Report says (page 51):

There is abundant evidence to indicate that the work of Knowles' committee came perilously close to that of those organizations whose sole effort is to combat militant unionism. The spread of unionism was watched with concern, particularly its spread into the unorganized agricultural areas of the State. A close differentiation was not always made between labor agitators and those truly engaged in subversive activities. Indeed, the close alliances that existed between Knowles' committee and the powerful employer associations lead to the conclusion that Knowles, whether wittingly or unwittingly, was frequently made the tool of their policies.

Knowles' relationship to the issues presented by this proceeding is not always clear. He was neither a candid nor a forthright witness. His memory tended too frequently to become beclouded when answers might have proven to be too revealing. Recollection, even when it existed, tended at times to be suspiciously faulty. Because of these tendencies it becomes necessary on occasion to disbelieve him and also to treat a hesitant qualified admission tortuously wrung from him as far more significant than would be the case with an open witness.