

...the time is expect-

ee-
ry
he
ng
ts
in
S.
an
st.
9
-
9
e
1
-
n
r-
in
-
-
n
e
n
e
p
is
e
t-
ll
r-
r-
o

CURRAN CLASHES WITH DIES: SAYS NMU IS NOT RED

edit
11/3/39
of
of

WASHINGTON — The opening gun in a new series of attacks on the NMU was let loose over the week end.

President Joe Curran was called before the Dies committee under subpoena for an inflammatory grilling on the activities of the union since the days of the rank and file.

The questions were mainly about Communism. But while Dies didn't learn much about Communism, he did learn a lot about the NMU and the shipowners.

The hearing was obviously stage-managed to provide an opening for a series of anti-labor, employer witnesses who are expected to testify within a few days.

Emerson May Testify

Mentioned as a strong possibility for the unenviable position as No. 1 shipowner witness is Ralph Emerson, former NMU legislative representative, now facing prosecution for financial irregularities.

During the hearing last Saturday, when Curran was testifying, Emerson sat by himself, way over to one side of the huge committee room—approached by no one except one member of the Dies Committee.

As a matter of fact, Emerson has been seen with Dies on several occasions recently and is believed to be assisting the shipowners in coaching Dies for his attacks on the union.

The only drawback, from the standpoint of Emerson's comfort, is the fact that he may be forced to avoid service of a warrant now being obtained by the NMU. The Committee may decide that, inasmuch as he is under a cloud, his testimony would do the shipowners more harm than good.

Hearing a Farce

The whole hearing was a farce, from beginning to end.

In the first place, the Committee issued a subpoena for Curran although he had repeatedly wiled Dies asking for an opportunity. No explanation was given for the

(Continued on Page 6)

CURRAN CLASHES WITH DIES; SAYS NMU IS NOT RED

(Continued from Page 1)

issuance of the subpoena. It shows how far a Congressional committee will stoop to cast reflection on a trade union.

In the second place, the questions, neatly typewritten for Rhea Whitley, Counsel for the Committee, embodied all the charges leveled against Curran and the union by shipowners from the day of the California "mutiny."

They followed the line laid down by the King-Carlucci Spy Group in the days of the so-called "Rank and File Pilot." They were concerned mainly with Communism.

At the very outset of the hearing, Curran was asked about Communists in the Union and, from the wording and tone of the questions, the implication was that any honest, active NMU member was a Communist or a Communist sympathizer.

"I don't know who is a Communist and who is not a Communist in the National Maritime Union," Curran answered. "I'm like Henry Ford; I wouldn't know one if I saw one."

When Whitley kept pressing him to name union members whom he knew to be Communists, Curran asked Whitley to tell him how to recognize one.

Dies Don't Want Our Side

Early in the hearing Joe attempted to read from a prepared statement but was cut off by Dies.

(See Page 12 for Statement Dies Committee refused to hear.)

"We don't permit statements here," he said.

"But you permitted John P. Frey, head of the AFL metal trades department, to read a 100,000-word prepared statement blasting the CIO when it took him three days to do it," Curran replied.

Dies banged with the gavel.

"That was last year," he shouted.

"And you permitted J. B. Matthews (Consumers Research strikebreaker) to read off a long statement attacking one Union after another," Curran continued.

Dies banged with the gavel again.

"That was last year," he said. Bang went the gavel. "We've changed our ruling." Bang!

"Also," Curran said, "You not only (Bang!) allowed statements to be read (Bang!) but I see here in the record (Bang!) that your colleague, Congressman Starnes, told (Bang!) a witness that you preferred statements."

Bang! Bang!! Bang!!!

"Shut up," Dies shouted. "You're here to answer questions, not to tell the Committee how to run its affairs." Bang!

"What a Circus"

"What a circus," Curran said.

"If you don't show some respect for this Committee, I'll cite you for contempt." Dies' face got redder and redder. Maybe he was

thinking of civil liberties in Texas.

The committee probably had a good reason for not wanting the statement read. The statement pointed out, among other things, that the Dies Committee, instead of hunting down un-American activities, had degenerated into a witch-hunting instrument of the manufacturers.

"I am convinced," the statement read, "that this committee has turned from the original course chartered by Congress and has been turned into an agency of destruction working, either consciously or unconsciously, for the steamship operators, manufacturers and industrialists of this country, to lower the standards that have been built up by the trade unions, especially those represented by the CIO."

"In our opinion, the investigation which your committee is conducting in relation to the National Maritime Union is linked closely to the activities of the ship operators, who for more than two years have been trying to destroy our Union, through the employment of labor spies and various other methods."

"This committee is being used by them to undermine and destroy the progressive, democratic union which they cannot buy or control."

Curran in Russia—On Exmoor

"Were you ever in Russia," Whitley asked.

"You bet I was," Joe answered, as the Committee lifted its ears eagerly. "I was in Odessa and other Black Sea ports as a member of the crew of the Exmoor."

As the hearing progressed, Joe got in more and more testimony about the fight of the shipowners against the seamen.

Whitley wanted to know what kind of books the Union sold to the crews.

Says Commission Knives NMU

"Oh," Joe answered, "All kinds of books dealing with labor, seaman's ship, spy groups and about the

Maritime Commission stabbing us in the back."

Representative Starnes broke in.

"Do you mean the United States Government set up an agency to stab the seamen in the back?" he asked.

"I said a Government agency, the Maritime Commission, is stabbing us in the back."

Representative Voorhis pressed the point.

"You mean that the Maritime Commission is not fair in dealing with the seamen?" he asked.

"That is just what I mean," Joe said. "The Maritime Commission, instead of sticking to its appointed job and building up the merchant marine, is harassing the seamen and trying to hamper their organizational activities."

"It is letting the operators hide behind it during the present negotiations and the fight on the union hiring hall. It set up a training school and, after promising to accept only seamen, takes in boys who had never been to sea before."

"And we have a pamphlet 'The Maritime Commission versus the Seamen' to prove it."

As the hearing wore on during the afternoon session, Dies became impatient with the course things were taking and finally, after trying to stop the witness from talking about trade union activities, gave up in despair and abruptly terminated the hearing.

He jumped up from his seat in irritation and was half-way to the door before the sound of his voice died away.

NMU Cleaning Along The Coast

Deck	Engine	Stewards	Total
			339*
			612