

City Workers Seek Probe Of Curran as Speaker

Union Sends Protest to La Guardia and Finance Offi- cials

Edward Lodge Curran's blast against America's ally, Russia, at the annual Communion breakfast of the City's Finance Dept. Sunday had prompt repercussion yesterday.

Officials of Local 53, of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America, CIO, made strenuous protest against "any attempt to disrupt the unity of the American people and to sow distrust of our allies."

They demanded an investigation of the selection of Curran as speaker, in telegrams to Mayor La Guardia and these officials who were present when Curran spoke:

City Treasurer Almerindo Portfolio.

Comptroller Joseph D. McGoldrick.

Paul Frankfurter, secretary of the Finance Dept.

The wire read:

"Patriotic employes of the Dept. of Finance and Comptroller's Office, protest participation of Father Curran, Christian Front leader, at Dept. of Finance Communion breakfast. We urge immediate investigation of persons responsible for attempt to undermine unity in war effort."

Local 53 has been urging wider participation by City departments in the War effort and had requested formation of a Win the War committee to mobilize City employes and officials.

"Had such a committee been in existence," union officials said yesterday, "it would not have been possible for anyone to spout venom before loyal patriotic workers."

Herman Uscott, president of Local 53, declared:

"The use of a worthy religious ceremony, such as the Communion breakfast, to sow disunity is a disgraceful performance.

"Father Curran's views did not represent the point of view of the great majority of Catholic employes who, like the great majority of Protestant and Jewish employes, are patriotic Americans, whole heartedly supporting the war against Hitlerism."

"What must be determined is to what extent fifth-column activity is prevalent, not only in the Dept. of Finance and Comptroller's Office but in the entire service."

Curran yesterday made public a telegram he sent to L. M. Birkhead, national director of the Friends of Democracy. Birkhead had protested to the Mayor in advance of Curran's appearance at the breakfast. Curran termed Birkhead's action "attempted un-American interference."

"Your attempt to stop a group of Catholic employes of New York City from having a Catholic priest deliver a Catholic talk at their Catholic communion breakfast is an example of undemocratic bigotry," said Curran.

Birkhead's rejoinder was:

"Since when did it become un-American to protest any kind of speech before any gathering, and particularly that of a person who spends his time attacking one of our allies, instead of the enemy?"