

Fish's Office Helped Remove Data Wanted In Nazi-Agent Inquiry

In the Bags?

Dennett, Fish Deny Knowing Secret of Wandering Files

Leading figures along the trail of the 20 missing mailbags had little to contribute last night to the explanation of their cross-town wanderings.

Prescott Dennett, from whose office the bags began their journey, said he was still a grand jury witness and the oath of secrecy prevented his talking, although there was much he would like to say.

Representative Hamilton Fish, Dennett said, never had visited his offices. Also the Make Europe Pay and Islands for Debts Committees have no tieup with the America First Committee, he said.

Representative Fish, whose office was the next stop after a House truck left Dennett's place with the mailbags, said:

"Why ask me that? I haven't seen Dennett for a year and I don't know what you are talking about. I don't know anything about any mail bags being taken up to my office. I was there last Friday and Saturday, too, and I ought to have known about it. I didn't see any mail bags. And I didn't send any mail bags to the America First Committee. I don't even know where it is."

Representative Fish was reached by telephone in New Bedford, Mass., where he spoke last night.



REPRESENTATIVE FISH

Mrs. Bennett Champ Clark, Washington chairman of the America First Committee, in whose office ten mail bags came to rest, said:

"I don't know anything about it."

Special Assistant Attorney General William Power Maloney and See COMMENT, Page 2, Column 4.

Edward J. Hickey, chief of the inquiry, had little more to say. Told that a marshal's van was seen outside the America First headquarters, they admitted that a subpoena was issued for some material there. But they would not say what the material was or where it originated.

Of the postage-free envelopes taken from his offices, Dennett explained that these were supplied when he purchased reprints of the Congressional Record through a Senator or Congressman. The purchase price of the speech, Dennett asserted, covered the postage free envelopes, and the copies of the speech were delivered in the franked envelopes, ready to be addressed and mailed.

Senator D. Worth Clark previously had said he had no idea where Dennett got envelopes bearing his frank. Representative Stephen A. Day said the same thing, yesterday, adding that he always took extreme care to see that nothing of the sort from his office "got into the hands of any subversive group."

Senator Gerald P. Nye, who went to Boston to make a speech, failed to answer a telegram of inquiry.

House Office Aides Sent Dennett Truck: America First Got 10 Bags of Records

By Dillard Stokes

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A Government truck sent by the office of Representative Hamilton Fish (Republican), of New York, hauled 20 mail bags of evidence from Prescott Dennett's office here the morning after Dennett was summoned before the District grand jury, which is investigating Nazi agents in this country.

Ten of the bags were traced to the headquarters of the America First Committee, 126 C Street Northeast, from where they were taken by United States deputy marshals yesterday.

Officers Silent

About half a dozen more of the mailbags were stored in the House Office Building. How many, if any have not been located, and what happened to them, remained mysteries last night, because all officials refused to discuss the matter.

It was from Dennett's office that bales of unused postage free envelopes, originally issued Congressmen for their official mail, were taken by Department of Justice officials on Tuesday.

The grand jury inquiry was started last week by William Power Maloney and Edward J. Hickey, special prosecutors of the Department of Justice "propaganda squad."

Frank B. Burch, Akron (Ohio) isolationist and Republican leader, was the first witness. After questioning him several days, the grand jurors indicted Burch on a charge of failing to register as an agent of the German government.

Last Thursday night, a summons to appear before the grand jury was served on Prescott Dennett, manager of Columbia Press Service and secretary of the Make Europe Pay and Islands for Debts Committees.

Has Many Callers

Dennett's offices are in a residence apartment house at 1430 Rhode Island Avenue Northwest. Among his many callers in the last year has been a tall, well-dressed, distinguished-looking man, resembling Fish.

Last Friday morning about 7:30 o'clock, just a few hours after Dennett was served with the grand jury subpoena, the distinguished-looking visitor came to the place and remained an hour, according to a neighbor. About an hour after he left, an official truck of the House of Representatives pulled up.

This truck, one of the fleet used for official business of the House and its members, came to the scene upon a request from the office of Representative Fish.

Dennett and the truck driver loaded the vehicle with data

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all bulging and apparently heavy, which they dragged through the hall and down the front steps. When a resident complained of the noise the driver heatedly retorted that he "was not supposed to be doing this."

Nevertheless, he did, with Dennett's aid. One observer said they dragged out at least 20 mailbags. The loaded truck then went to the House Office Building, where its cargo was taken to the offices of Representative Fish.

From Fish's office, some of the Dennett mailbags were taken to storage compartments and others were trucked to the America First Committee.

With the mailbags out of his hands Dennett went blithely off to obey the grand jury summons, arriving an hour late.

Before the grand jury—as came out later when Official Reporter Horace Webb read the record in open court—Dennett was asked who were the members of his isolationist committees, how they became members and where the committees got their money. His memory was vague. But, he said, he had records.

When Dennett was excused, Foreman John Gorrell ordered him to be back Tuesday with the pertinent records. A subpoena duces tecum reinforced this order last Monday night. But the next day Dennett did not have them. So the grand jury haled him before Justice Jesse C. Adkins for contempt of court action.

For Dennett, Attorney O. H. Osterman pleaded that it would take weeks to pick out what the grand jury wanted, because the committees' records were vast and confused. Nothing was said by any one about the 20 mail bags having been taken away.

Unimpressed by Osterman's plea, Justice Adkins suggested that Dennett give all his records to the prosecutors, who would select what the grand jury had asked for. Dennett said he would. And still nothing was said about any 20 mail bags having been taken away.

That afternoon last Tuesday the Department of Justice hauled off a truckload of material from Dennett's office. This included bales of unused postage-free envelopes originally issued, for official use, to Fish, Representative Stephen A. Day (Republican), of Illinois; Representative Martin L. Sweeney (Democrat), of Ohio; Senator D. Worth Clark (Democrat), of Idaho; Representative George H. Tinkham (Republican), of Massachusetts; Senator Gerald P. Nye (Republican), of North Dakota; Former Representative J. Thorkelson (Republican), of Montana, and the late Senator Ernest Lundeen (Farmer Labor), of Minnesota, all isolationists.

All day Wednesday, the grand jury considered other matters, while the "propaganda squad" pored over the material given up by Dennett.

Yesterday, the portly Dennett was again at the grand jury headquarters, sequestered in a witness room guarded by Col. James S. McCarthy, marshal of the grand jury.

While the hours dragged by, Dennett paced up and down, Colonel McCarthy warned off those who tried to talk to Dennett. Meantime, the grand jury heard the man who drove the House truck.

Finally Dennett was seen to be taken into the grand jury. A few minutes later, Capt. L. Botsford, war veteran and a United States deputy marshal, led a squad of men to a huge van, which drove straight to the headquarters of the America First Committee.

Leaving his van half a block away, Botsford entered the committee building, where he conferred with Miss Isabel French, of the headquarters staff. Then came an hour and a half of inactivity, in which a dozen persons entered and left the place, while Botsford waited inside, and Dennett stayed at the grand jury headquarters.

Then Botsford waved for his van and his men dragged ten mail bags out of the America First headquarters, locked up the van and drove back to Judiciary Square.

The same van later was seen to drive into the Department of Justice, where it was conjectured the prosecutors were going through the contents of the mail bags.