

Congressmen Gave Dennett Full Scope, Mother Says

Adds He Used Frank With Their Knowing; Burch Offers Guilty Plea in Nazi Probe

By Dillard Stokes
Post Staff Writer

The mother of Prescott Dennett, the man who has been declared by a special grand jury to have been "used" by a German agent for the dissemination of Nazi propaganda, yesterday asserted that her son had the full authorization of Congressmen whose speeches he franked.

The grand jury has charged that Dennett and the Congressional franking privilege had been a channel through which George Sylvester Viereck disseminated Nazi propaganda. Viereck has pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging violation of the Foreign Agent Registration Act.

Other developments yesterday in the investigation of German agents by the grand jury were these:

1. A new witness told hitherto undisclosed details about the traffic in franked speeches between the House Office Buildings and the headquarters of Dennett.

2. Frank B. Burch, Akron, Ohio, lawyer who was the first to be indicted in the Nazi agent probe, tried to make a limited plea of guilty. But Justice James M. Morris rejected the plea, saying the 68-year-old former State Senator must either admit without reserve that he was an unregistered agent of the Reich or go to trial before a jury. This is due to be settled today.

The new witness was Irving T. Quinn, 3700 Massachusetts Avenue Northwest, an aide at the House postoffice. Quinn, a husky, blond, 20-year-old former college football player, gave the first definite information on the consignment of franked speeches to Dennett.

Recalls Shipment

Quinn said that one large shipment of 8 to 12 bags went to Dennett's Make Europe Pay and Islands for War Debts Committees, 1430 Rhode Island Avenue Northwest, in July. This delivery was part of a volume of about 200 mailbags a day that passed through his hands at the time.

When the special grand jurors summoned Dennett he had about a ton of unaddressed franked material on hand and he promptly got rid of most of it, using a truck sent to him by George Hill, a secretary of Representative Hamilton Fish.

Some of these bags were taken to the America First Committee. Quinn was present when six or eight more of them reached the House and heard Hill order that they be placed in Store Room 30, which contains a bin used by Representative Fish.

Denied by Fish

After this was disclosed by The Post, Mr. Fish said it was a lie and told the House his secretary refused to receive the bags. Last week, when threatened with a contempt citation, Hill had the bags delivered to the grand jury.

The grand jurors are due to hear Quinn, and some of his coworkers, when sessions are resumed on Friday. They have already grilled Hill and Walter L. Reynolds, Mr. Fish's principal secretary.

Mrs. Mabel Dennett, frail, elderly mother of the man who conducts two anti-interventionist committees, told The Post that she was "shocked

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and grieved" by its comments upon the denial of Congressmen that they had any connection with her son.

"The statements are not factual," Mrs. Dennett continued, "because both my son's secretary and myself know that Congressmen have given him their speeches to frank out. He and I have franked out some to Congressmen's constituents requesting the same. One Congressman in particular asked me over the phone how I liked his speech!"

Son Halts Revelations

Dennett emphatically forbade his mother to discuss the case when a Post reporter sought further details from her. (Her letter appears in full on today's editorial page.)

Dennett himself also mailed the franked envelopes, said Miss Myrtle G. Ince, 3222 Wisconsin Avenue, who was his secretary for several months this summer. She expressed confidence in both Mrs. Dennett and her son, declaring both were people of their word.

"He worked for hours and hours to get them (the franked letters) out," she said, "but I can't say what Congressmen's franks they were."

Miss Ince said she had been questioned at the Department of Justice by Special Assistant Attorney General William Power Maloney, of the propaganda squad, which is directing the inquiry under the leadership of Assistant Attorney General Wendell Berge.

Burch, who pleaded not guilty on September 24 to the charge that he got \$10,000 from the German consul in Cleveland, for propaganda work, was unstrung and haggard yesterday when he asked Justice Morris to let him change his plea. The justice asked whether Burch understood what he was about to do.

"Yes, sir," Burch replied, adding "but I at no time thought I was using German money. There is no question that I was in fact using German money, but I was counsel to the German consul. I was not in fact registered (as a German agent) but I did not think I had to register."

Legal Knowledge Pointed Out

Special Prosecutors Maloney and Edward J. Hickey had listened in silence. Maloney then interrupted to point out that Burch had been a lawyer for more than 40 years and told the grand jury he got \$10,000 from the German.

Burch said he thought this was collected from American citizens.

Justice Morris said under these circumstances he doubted that the Court could receive a guilty plea, commenting, "I consider this offense to be very serious. I don't want any defendant to come into this court and plead guilty unless he knows what he is doing."

"I am an old man," Burch rejoined. "I can't go through a trial. I don't think I could stand it. Therefore I wish to plead guilty. I have suffered enough."

"I realize that this is a tragic situation," the justice said, "but I will not receive such a plea unless I am more fully advised. I will hear this matter again tomorrow."

Ex-Football Player Aids Investigators



IRVING T. QUINN,

20, former Auburn (Ala.) football player and aide at the House Postoffice, who recalls having driven quantities of franked mail to the headquarters of Prescott Dennett, alleged tool of the German propaganda machine

Upon my return to Washington after spending a part of the summer at my home in Maine, I am much surprised so read some of your articles, especially your initial editorial in this Saturday's Post.

To say that I am shocked and grieved at your concluding paragraph expresses my feelings feebly.

The statements are not factual because both my son's secretary and myself know that Congressmen have given him their speeches to frank out. She and I have franked out some to Congressmen's constituents requesting the same. One Congressman in particular asked me over the phone how I liked his speech!

I am sure that you have been wrongly informed on this point and will be glad to be corrected.

My son has not defended himself as he is under the oath of secrecy, and has so far held very rigidly to it. I wish a few more were under the same oath!

As Congressman Fish said, as reported in your paper October 3: "There was nothing improper in Congressmen sending franked speeches to Dennett, who was not under suspicion by them, or the public, or anybody else, as far as I know."

Also, didn't you read in the September 29 Washington Star the following: "Postoffice officials said no abuse of the use of the frank has come to their attention in the Dennett case and no investigation is now under way or being considered."

I am forbidden by my son to do anything at this time, but I cannot always obey as parents are supposed to do nowadays, so, in the interest of fair play, please print this letter and win my gratitude.

MABEL F. DENNETT.

Washington, Oct. 11.