

Miss Ingalls Proved Pro-Nazi Attitude, Prosecutor Asserts

Contacts With Embassy Followed Her Statements, Balch Tells Jury

Laura Ingalls proved her pro-German attitude long before she admittedly made secret contacts with the German Embassy and received pay for services, Special Prosecutor Dewey T. Balch asserted today in the Government's opening argument as the trial of the aviatrix for allegedly serving as an unregistered foreign agent drew to a close.

Mr. Balch, an assistant to the Attorney General, pointed out that several Government witnesses from various cities had testified to Miss Ingalls' expressed admiration for Hitler and the German cause in 1940. According to the Government's evidence and her own story, the prosecutor went on, Miss Ingalls did not launch her intrigue at the German Embassy until early in 1941. She contended she did so as a self-appointed secret agent of the United States.

Mr. Balch contended that Miss Ingalls' asserted statements to the witnesses in 1940 represented "her true viewpoint." He added:

"Is that consistent with a purpose of counter-espionage, with true loyalty to her country?"

The prosecutor also directed the jury's attention to the undisputed fact that Miss Ingalls had not mentioned her alleged role as a secret agent for this country until after she had been taken to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and learned that all her recent activities were known.

The prosecutor argued that the evidence proved Miss Ingalls had been carrying on propaganda for the German government under the guise of a speaking tour for the America First Committee and had refused to register with the State Department as a German agent, "so that the citizens could know who she was working for and who was paying her."

The case was expected to go to the District Court jury early this afternoon, following the charge of Justice James W. Morris.

"Preconceived Defense" Hit.

Mr. Balch saw as significant Miss Ingalls' asserted statement to Miss Julia Kraus, admitted intermediary between the flyer and the German Embassy, of what they were to say if the F. B. I. questioned them.

"If the F. B. I. questions me," the prosecutor quoted Miss Ingalls, "we will say and stick to it that I was conducting an investigation for my Government."

Mr. Balch called this a "preconceived defense," adding that if Miss Ingalls really had been engaged in

59
2/13/42
counter espionage for the United States, "her activities would clearly show it."

James F. Reilly, defense attorney, told the jury of two women and 10 men that, in carrying on what the Government called pro-German propaganda, Miss Ingalls had done no more than many eminent Americans had been doing at the time. Members of Congress and others opposed to war, he pointed out, had been saying the same things on platforms all over the country that the aviatrix had said, and she was concerned primarily with keeping this country at peace.

"Bit of a Crackpot."

Declaring that Miss Ingalls' record showed her to be a woman of "courage, ambition and a tremendous amount of egotism," the defense attorney added:

"She also has shown herself to be a bit of a crackpot. In fact, this woman is a fanatic in carrying out what she believes."

Mr. Reilly charged the F. B. I. with keeping Miss Ingalls under interrogation steadily for 24 hours without sleep. While the Government, he added, had ridiculed her claim to have been a one-person counter-espionage service, she always has done things alone, he pointed out. He cited her long flight over the Andes, the first woman to achieve that.

Speaking of Miss Ingalls' admitted statements expressing admiration for what Hitler had done for the German people, Mr. Reilly said:

"A lot of people of Irish blood think that Hitler is no worse than Cromwell war."

A Mata Hari, She Says.

The noted flyer was on the witness stand most of yesterday's session, and she insisted vehemently that, although she was on the payroll of the German Embassy for 51 days, her only motive was to obtain confidential information which might be of service to the United States Government in its effort to thwart spies and subversive elements.

"I saw myself as a Mata Hari," said Miss Ingalls. "As an international spy, let us say."

Miss Ingalls earlier had described herself, in letters and on the stand, as "incurably romantic." She pointed to her adventurous career as an aviatrix, which during 11 years had brought her many exciting experiences and enabled her to hang up a number of records.

The flyer conceded, during her testimony, that some of the anti-British assertions in correspondence presented by the Government represented her actual views at the time, although these sentiments had been emphasized to convince the German Embassy official with whom she was in contact.

Wanted U. S. to Shun War.

Referring to several letters to Hans Thomsen, then Charge d'Affaires of the German Embassy, containing violent attacks on Britain and exultation at German victories, Miss Ingalls said:

"That was the way I felt at the time. I didn't want to see us get into this war. All my friends were pro-British and there was nothing I could do about it. And I wanted to impress Dr. Thomsen that I was sincerely interested in the German cause."

The flyer admitted she had quoted Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in some of her speeches, explaining: "He was feeding fire to the German people. I thought it was better to feed fire to the American people if we were to defend ourselves."

She said she also had quoted Churchill, Lincoln, Emerson and Nietzsche in her speeches for the America First Committee.