

T-H 12/31/39

BRIDGES SAYS HE WILL SEEK CITIZENSHIP

Labor Leader Reaffirms

Belief in Democracy

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 30 (U.P.).—Harry Bridges, California CIO director cleared of communism charges by Dean James Landis, of Harvard Law School, tonight announced he would seek American naturalization immediately and expressed the hope industrial peace "can be speedily realized."

In a conciliatory statement hailing the Landis report as a victory for all labor, Bridges said:

"I hope it is now possible for the employers to sit down with the unions and work out their problems in a sensible fashion . . . I hope that now employers will put disproved slanders behind them. If they do this, the unions' earnest desire for industrial peace can be speedily realized."

Dispute Still Rages

The Landis decision apparently eliminated possibility of Bridges' being deported to his native Australia but failed to still the controversy over Bridges that has raged on the Pacific coast since the San Francisco general strike in 1934.

Today Bridges reiterated he was not a Communist and that he believed in American democracy.

Obstacles Cleared Away

"I have stated under oath on the witness stand that I believe in the American form of government and hope that it can be made to work for the benefit of the majority of the American people," he said. "I have long desired to become an American citizen.

"It should now be obvious, through the disclosures of the proceedings, why I have been unable to fulfill that desire. Now that the obstacles have been cleared away, I shall seek naturalization at the earliest possible opportunity."

Miss Perkins Prepares To Cancel Deportation

Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins last night prepared to take formal action on the deportation warrant outstanding against Harry Bridges, West Coast CIO maritime chieftain.

She was expected to cancel the warrant after study of the report of James M. Landis, special trial examiner, who cleared Bridges of charges of Communist Party membership or affiliation.

When Miss Perkins will act was not known. However, she started study of Landis' 75,000-word report yesterday and action was expected to be speedy.

King Demands Deportation

If the warrant is canceled, Bridges will be free to remain in this country and to obtain American citizenship. The warrant was issued by the Federal Immigration Service March 2, 1938. Landis conducted an 11-weeks' hearing on the matter in San Francisco last summer.

Senator William H. King (D.), of Utah, demanded last night that Bridges be deported as an "undesirable alien" despite the Harvard law dean's report.

"The opinion of Mr. Landis is just what I expected," King asserted. "I tried to follow the testimony as it was reported in the press and I have been in California when Bridges was raising the devil. Undoubtedly Bridges is not an American and is not in sympathy with our system and should be deported as an undesirable alien."