

Seek Increased Power for FBI

WASHINGTON, D. C.—As the Federal Bureau of Investigation presses its attempt to deport Harry Bridges, a bill is being pressured through congress which would give the anti-labor FBI even broader powers.

It is HR 4228, introduced by Rep. Sam Hobbs of (poll tax) Alabama. This bill would permit wire-tapping, now a felony, by the FBI in cases of "sabotage, kidnapping, extortion, and espionage."

Originally the bill was HR 2266, and writing of it in the new New York newspaper, PM, Nathan Robertson said:

"In executive session the full committee (house judiciary) heard sharply conflicting testimony from Mr. Jackson (attorney-general) and from James

L. Fly, chairman of the federal communications commission.

"Mr. Jackson's testimony for the bill was submitted later in written form, and published; Mr. Fly's, against the bill and contradicting some of Mr. Jackson's, was submitted only in executive session and has not been published."

Pressure on the bill came chiefly from Hobbs, its sponsor, and Alexander Holtzoff, counsel and lobbyist for the FBI.

SECRET HEARING

When HR 2266 was sent to a sub-committee for consideration, its backers grew impatient. They enlisted the aid of the house judiciary committee's chairman, Hatton Sumners, of (Poll tax) Texas. Sumners took it away from the sub-committee and summoned the full judiciary committee into a secret hearing.

At this hearing Jackson and Fly appeared. Fly stated that it is impossible to make wire-tapping safe; that it would endanger national defense communication. This important testimony was suppressed.

On March 31, Hobbs introduced a new bill, HR 4228. It was referred to the judiciary committee and reported out by the committee the next day without hearings.

Marquis W. Childs quoted Fly's testimony in the St. Louis Post Dispatch as follows:

"... Arguing that the widespread use of wire-tapping might be a hindrance to the defense drive, Fly made the point that it is not safe to assume that all detectives can be entrusted with this power. He cited three examples to emphasize his point.

"During World War 1, he said, the FBI employed as an investigating agent one Philip Musica. When Musica was later exposed under the name of Donald M. Coster (McKesson Robbins scandal) it was established that he had a criminal record at the time he served the FBI."

Fly also cited Agent Leon C. Turrou, who, while investigating a German spy ring, turned over vital information to a New York

newspaper, and Gaston B. Means, the FBI agent who was convicted in an extortion attempt growing out of the Lindbergh kidnapping.

Childs also wrote:

"A member of the committee asked Fly what the political implications of wire-tapping would be. The witness pointed out that inasmuch as the top officers of the government were political officers the possibilities were enormous."

BUSINESS, TOO

Even business lobbied against the bill. T. Edwin Quisenberry, of Chicago, appeared before the committee and gave his views. Reporting this in the Baltimore Sun, Paul W. Ward said:

"A Chicago banker . . . warned committee members that legalization of wire-tapping would probably depress telephone securities . . ." This happened in European countries which legalized it, he said.

And Ward of the Baltimore Sun reported Fly as saying:

"That the business community would hate any legalization of wire-tapping and—regardless of the government's intent—would fear that phones were being tapped for evidence of income-tax evasion, anti-trust law violation and resistance to the Wagner labor relations act and the NLRB's proceedings thereunder."

MINNEAPOLIS—The CIO Unemployed Union of this city last week demanded "the immediate dismissal of the Harry Bridges case;" in a resolution adopted by the membership and sent to Attorney General Jackson.

On Parole



JOHN THOMPSON
Wife-Slayer