

# Jailing of Reporter In Jersey Spurring Move in Legislature

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NEWARK, Oct. 5—The Republican floor leader of the New Jersey Assembly said today that the jailing of a reporter for refusing to answer questions before a grand jury would assure a vote next month on a bill expanding newspapermen's privilege against being forced to divulge confidential sources.

Richard W. De Korte, the floor leader, said the bill, sponsored by Senator James H. Wallwork, Essex Republican, was certain to come up for a vote as a result of the civil contempt citation against Peter J. Bridge, who was a reporter for the now-defunct Evening News of Newark.

The bill passed the Senate before the summer recess in June but never got to the floor of the lower house because of the long fight over tax reform.

But Mr. De Korte, a Bergen County Republican who has steered some of the most important and controversial legislation through the Assembly over the last two years, warned that even extending New Jersey's present statutory protection of newsmen's sources would not mean that a reporter could not go to jail in a case such as Mr. Bridge's. This is because a court found that Mr. Bridge had waived his protection through his actions.

#### Answered 80 Questions

"Even the confidentiality of the lawyer-client relationship can be waived," Mr. De Korte said, but he added he "doubted" that he would have decided as the court did in the case of Mr. Bridge.

The reporter had cooperated with the Essex County grand jury investigating allegations of corruption in the Newark Housing Authority when he answered 80 questions bearing on what he wrote, and supported under oath the material he presented in his account.

The reason he was cited for contempt was that he refused to answer five questions about what he might or might not know aside from what appeared in his story.

Mr. Bridge had written that Mrs. Pearl Beatty, a housing commissioner, said an unidentified man offered her a \$10,000 bribe to influence her vote in the selection of an executive director for the Housing Authority.