

# Rep. Hansen's Prison Term Set Aside

WASHINGTON, April 25 (AP) — Terming Representative George Hansen "stupid" but not necessarily "evil," United States District Judge George L. Hart Jr. set aside today his two-month prison term and instead fined him \$2,000 for violating campaign finance laws.

"I assumed when I sentenced him to jail he was evil," Judge Hart said from the bench. Picking up a thread from Mr. Hansen's lawyer, the judge added, "Now, I am not so sure. Stupid, surely."

Judge Hart sentenced Mr. Hansen last week to one year in jail with 10 months suspended, after the Republican representative's guilty pleas to two misdemeanor violations of campaign finance laws.

Mr. Hansen would have been the first sitting Congressman to be jailed in 19 years. He has consistently maintained that politicians played a role in the charges against him, and that his violations were unintentional.

In pleading for a reduced sentence, Mr. Hansen stood before the judge and described his campaign as "freewheeling, and maybe we should have sought counsel and proper advice."

"We were trying to do everything," he said. "Perhaps I was not careful. I apologize."

## Lawyer Makes Plea

Mr. Hansen's attorney, Robert S. Bennett, said that the jail sentence had "virtually destroyed" the Idaho Representative's life, and added that jail sentences were important to deter crime. But "now we ask that you not go all the way," he said.

"Please, Almighty God, don't set the example with Mr. Hansen," he pleaded. "I hesitate to say this. Congressman Hansen was stupid, but he wasn't evil."

Mr. Bennett said that all of Mr. Hansen's campaign funds had eventually been accounted for.

The lawyer also asserted that other candidates in the Idaho primary had technically committed some of the same infractions that Mr. Hansen had, but no charges had been brought against them.

He said that Mr. Hansen's primary opponent, Orval Hansen, the incumbent, had sat on the House Administration Committee, which investigated George Hansen's finances and referred them to the Justice Department for prosecution during the campaign.

## Case Termed Closed

"This is a fact that is more than coincidental," Mr. Bennett said.

A Justice Department attorney, William Hendricks, said that George Hansen had failed to report portions of his campaign finances for a long time, but added that it was difficult to distinguish between accounting errors and evil intent.

Afterward, he said the Hansen case was closed. He declined to comment on most questions, but did say "stupid reporting can be crime."

Mr. Hansen said that he thought Judge Hart's fine was "entirely fair."

Mr. Hansen's wife, Connie, who burst into tears last Friday when the jail sentence was imposed, burst into tears of happiness today when the sentence was lifted.

Mr. Hansen had conferred with his lawyers all week, seeking a legal basis to have his sentence modified. He had said that he might seek to serve his prison time at nights or on weekends, so he could attend to his duties in the House.

Mr. Hansen faced a maximum sentence of one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000 on each charge brought in connection with the Republican primary last August. He pleaded guilty in February to one count of failing to file a required campaign report and one count of filing an incomplete report.

In the first count, he was charged with failing to report to the House Clerk last June 10 that he had personally received contributions and made expenditures.

In the second count, he was charged with reporting to the House Clerk on July 22 that he had not received any contributions or made any expenditures.

The Justice Department said that a total of \$16,000 was involved.