

Appeals Board Voids Ouster of Harry Bridges

T-11 1/6/41
Four Members Veto

Examiner's Finding CIO Chief Is Red

A recommendation that Harry R. Bridges, Australian-born CIO West Coast leader, be deported as a Communist who favors the overthrow of the American form of government, was rejected yesterday by the Immigration Board.

The board's vote was unanimous, with four of its members, J. A. Fanelli, Robert M. Charles, Thomas C. Finucane and Thomas M. Cooley 3, all voting to set aside the findings by Special Examiner Charles B. Sears that Bridges was a Communist.

Ashurst Fails to Vote

The fifth board member, former U. S. Senator Henry F. Ashurst (D.), of Arizona, did not vote because of anti-Bridges speeches he had made in Congress.

The decision, contained in a 99-page pamphlet which urged that a Bridges arrest warrant be voided and proceedings against him dropped, was submitted to Attorney General Francis Biddle. He may approve it, order a new hearing, or reject it and revert to Sears' recommendations.

The board's findings evoked a statement from Senator Joseph H. Ball (R.), of Minnesota, a member of the Upper House's Labor Committee, that "the nation would be a lot better off if we got rid of Bridges."

Reynolds' Reaction

Senator Robert R. Reynolds (D.), of North Carolina, head of the Military Affairs Committee, declared that the board's rejection "throws the matter into the lap of the American people," and asserted he would make no further effort to get Bridges deported, since the Senate twice voted down a deportation bill against the labor boss.

His views were supported by Senator Allen J. Ellender (D.), of Louisiana, who said he had always felt that "it is wrong for Congress to particularize in connection with any individual."

Declaring himself "gratified with the decision," Senator Sheridan Downey (D.), of California, said it would unify labor on the Pacific Coast and would "act as a stimulant to all-out defense production."

Will Demand Probe

One of his colleagues in the lower house, Representative Leland M. Ford (R.), of California, who has consistently denounced Bridges, promised he would demand a congressional investigation of the whole case, and Representative A. Leonard Allen (D.), of Louisiana, served notice that he would press for Senate action on his bill to oust Bridges from the country.

Bridges, who led maritime workers on the Pacific Coast in some of their most successful strikes, has applied for American citizenship three times, but has never carried his petition through to naturalization.

His case became a cause celebre in CIO circles three years ago and led to charges by Ford that he was being protected by powerful official interests.

Sears' report, a 187-page volume which summarized 7,546 pages of testimony, accused Bridges of having admitted to Harry Lundeberg, secretary-treasurer of the Seamen's Union of the Pacific, that he had been a Communist.