

Beck Ignored John English, What an Error

No. 2 Teamster Showed Courage, Balked At Proposals

By NORMAN WALKER
 WASHINGTON — Everybody makes mistakes, but one of Dave Beck's worst was ignoring John F. English, a top fellow officer of the great Teamsters Union.
 English is a 47-year-old Irishman who as a teen-age boy went to work guiding a horse-drawn dumpcart through the elegant Beacon Hill section of Boston.
 As general secretary-treasurer of the Teamsters, English began drawing the reins on Beck's tangled handling of union funds long before the Senate Rackets Investigating Committee became interested in the Teamsters president.

Beck Falls to Heed
 Beck never paid too much attention to English, his No. 2 man in the Teamsters. He dealt with English's subordinates on money matters.
 But back in 1955 English balked at the union's buying Beck's Seattle home for \$160,000 and letting Beck continue to use it rent-free.
 That didn't seem too sensible to English, a conservative and careful man. He gave in on the home purchase only after the union's entire executive board put an okay in writing.
 A year later, English wouldn't pay out some \$50,000 for the union to buy Beck's home furnishings—even with board approval. And he recently quered Beck's plan for a million-dollar, union-paid publicity program in Beck's behalf.

It Took Courage
 That followed Beck's statement—and refusal to testify—that he used some \$300,000 to \$400,000 in union funds from other sections of the union than the national level over which English guards the pursestrings.
 Saying "no" to Beck took a bit of courage.
 What type of man is this courageous Teamster?

He shuns publicity. Practically every newsman in town wants to interview English, but his "no" to them, through aides, is as firm as his replies to Beck.
 The one thing English wants known at the moment is that he is not, repeat not, volunteering information about the Teamsters to the Senate Rackets Investigating Committee.

Yes, he has seen the committee's counsel, Robert Kennedy, a few times. Yes, he has answered Kennedy's question and produced records, but in each case after Kennedy produced a subpoena for that document.

This—plus a few lines of biographical material—is all English will put out right now. His brief "background information" discloses he has been a Teamsters Union member for 53 years.

Tall and Robust
 But a few other facts are known. He is a robust, tall, cigar-smoking individual with a wooden leg, although agile with his cane.

He claims to have been known at one time as "Boston Johnny—the Friend of the Working Girl." This no romantic note—he once helped some woman in a Boston candy plant get a pay raise.
 Beck has never fooled him. He was a friend of old Dan Tobin, the late Teamsters president, whom Beck hustled out of office. When Tobin was around, English was a traveling auditor and organizer, who reported things to Tobin.

One of those things was Beck's power buildup with the union's West Coast units. Tobin, like English, believed in a decentralized union. Together they worked against what Beck was driving for—centralized power.

'Real' Opposite
 Few people could be more opposite than Beck and English. Where Beck blusters and talks in millions, English is the old politician type who works the alleys and byways, shaking hands and making friends.

Is English shooting for Beck's job? The answer is no, English has ambitions sailed away. He is not the ambitious type.

English is a satisfied man with his \$30,000 annual union salary—the same as Beck's. He can't understand all the commotion about making another dollar when he already has one in his pocket.
 But it's understood that if no one else does, English will oppose Beck's announced plan to run for another five-year term next September as Teamsters president.
 Certainly any serious Beck opponent will have to clear with John English.

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