

Former AEC Chiefs To Testify For Ousted Oppenheimer

By JOHN M. HIGHTOWER
WASHINGTON (AP)—The two former chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission plan to testify at the security hearing for ousted atomic scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer—both of them apparently in his behalf.

David E. Lillenthal, who headed the commission from the time it was formed in 1946 until 1950, said

in a statement issued in New York last night he will testify for Oppenheimer.

Gordon Dean, who succeeded Lillenthal and served until last summer, said he had been asked to testify by Oppenheimer's attorney, while he would not discuss what he will say, his acceptance of an invitation by the defense presumably means his testimony will be favorable to Oppenheimer.

Another prospective witness is Dr. Vannevar Bush, wartime head of the office of Scientific Research and Development. An aide said Bush expects to testify.

The hearings for Oppenheimer, suspended from access to government secrets by order of President Eisenhower, are going on in a secret room somewhere in Washington. The procedure is guided by strict rules formalized by the AEC in September 1950 in an effort to provide maximum protection for the rights of individuals and for the government's interests.

The AEC has announced only that Oppenheimer was suspended, that a hearing is in progress and the membership of the three-man inquiry board.

Expressions of confidence in Oppenheimer came yesterday from Dr. David Hill, chairman of the Federation of American Scientists, and from Dr. Howard Meyerhoff, executive director of the Scientific Manpower Commission, a group set up by eight major scientific societies.

Hill, connected with the Los Alamos, N. M., atomic laboratory, said he is "personally confident that Dr. Oppenheimer will be cleared."

Meyerhoff said in a statement: "There is no more competent person with more in his head on the atomic program... than Dr. Oppenheimer, and it seems to me that he simply must be in the councils of the government."

Secretary of Defense Wilson implied yesterday that Oppenheimer had been eased out as an adviser to the armed forces last year. He said the committee on which Oppenheimer served had been abolished last July and added that was a "real smooth way" to get rid of a problem. He gave no other details, but in general comment told a news conference:

"Frankly, I have sympathy for anyone who made a mistake and then reformed. But I think they should be reformed somewhere else than in the armed services."

In Dallas, Sen. McCarthy (R-Wis.) said he has considered Oppenheimer a security risk for years, and he added: "One man in a key spot can do more damage than a thousand in little ones." The senator also told newsmen he is "deeply concerned about security on new developments of the H-bomb" and said, "We've got our eyes on some other fellows besides Oppenheimer."

Oppenheimer's own release of an

exchange of letters with K. D. Nichols, general manager of the AEC, brought out the nature of the charges against him and his own reply, including various flat denials.

In short, the man who played perhaps the leading scientific role in development of the atomic bomb and who foresaw the hydrogen bomb was accused of having associated with known Communists, of having belonged to various Communist-front organizations and of having sought to delay the H-bomb. Oppenheimer has strongly denied ever having party membership, but acknowledged some association with Communists years ago. He said he advised against all-out work on the H-bomb in 1949, along with other scientists, but did all he could to further it after former President Truman gave the go-ahead.

Oppenheimer has successfully undergone various security clearances in the past. But under 1953 rules laid down by the Eisenhower administration, all persons against whom there had been "substantial" derogatory information were ordered re-investigated.

Notified of his suspension, Oppenheimer in March requested a hearing. Under AEC rules the hearing board had to be made up of private persons who had not "prejudged" the case and whose trustworthiness was so great they could hear evidence bearing on inner secrets of the AEC.

The assignment fell to former Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray, now University of North Carolina president, who is chairman; Thomas A. Morgan, former president of the Sperry Corp., and Dr. Ward V. Evans, chemistry professor at Loyola University, Chicago.

Persons familiar with security procedures say hearings go along somewhat in the manner of a court trial but with considerably more freedom as to the scope of testimony and evidence.

In fact, the board is under instruction to treat the whole case as "an inquiry and not a trial."



DON MCKENZIE, baritone soloist in the sacred cantata, "The Seven Last Words of Christ" by Dubois, to be presented by the choir of the First Presbyterian Church Thursday evening, April 15, at 7:30 p.m. Other soloists are Mrs. Marvin Nereth, soprano and Jed Murphy, tenor.

Turpentine Bath Proves Hot Deal

DENVER (AP)—Everett Watson, 82, dunked his bandaged hand into a basin of turpentine last night to relieve the swelling caused by arthritis.

The home remedy was so soothing, he settled back in a chair and lighted his favorite pipe. He was released from Denver General Hospital after treatment for hand burns.

Sunday Auto Sale Out In Muskogee

MUSKOGEE, Okla. (AP)—City officials, seeking to enforce ordinances against Sunday automobile sales, dug into old statutes and found more than they bargained for.

They dusted off an ancient blue law—in effect—that permits sale of "vital necessities" only after 9 a.m. Sunday. Specifically banned are groceries, cigarettes, fish bait and automobiles.

President May Open Files In Housing Scandal; New Pressure Put On Probe

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Eisenhower was reported ready today to order government tax files opened up for the Senate Banking Committee's probe of multimillion-dollar housing scandals.

Some committee members nonetheless felt strongly the inquiry would at least slow up Eisenhower's housing program—and perhaps kill it altogether for this session of Congress.

Sen. Capehart (R-Ind.), Banking Committee chairman, said he talked to the White House and expected to receive shortly a list of at least 251 firms or individuals "who were beneficiaries of big windfalls" aggregating 100 million dollars.

"We'll get the worst ones up here and put them under oath," he said in an interview.

He also said he would "probably" confer with Atty. Gen. Brownell, at Brownell's request, on possible indictments which might come out of parallel probes by the administration itself, the Banking Committee and the Senate House Committee on Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures, headed by Sen. Byrd (D-Va.).

The Banking committee had planned to start final work on a housing bill next Tuesday. But what senators called "shocking exposures" indicated close scrutiny of both old and new sections in the House-passed bill and grave doubts whether the job could be finished in time for action during this Congress.

One senator said the committee was "in no mood to write up a housing bill."

Byrd told the Senate yesterday the housing program had been marred by extravagance and irresponsibility "if not actual fraud and graft." He said "criminal prosecution may result" if evidence shows government officials acted deliberately in such cases.

Sen. Williams (R-Del.) said on the Senate floor that indictments were "pending in the federal courts."

Capehart's committee was reported preparing an announcement that it would start public hearings next Monday.

Since the charges of widespread scandal were first aired, two top FHA officials have left their jobs. The first to go was Guy T. O. Holliday, named last year by Eisenhower to head the FHA. Last night Norman P. Mason, acting FHA boss, announced he had accepted a request for retirement from Walter F. Greene, deputy FHA commissioner. Greene had been with the agency since 1937.

Capehart said his committee would start an immediate study of the 251 cases as soon as they are received and would eventually sift through a total 7,000 apartment projects built under one section of the housing act.

Most of the 251, he said, involve operators who reaped inflated profits out of the rental housing program of the post-World War II period. These profits, which Capehart estimated might total a half billion dollars, came from FHA-insured loans far greater than the

actual cost of building an apartment house. He said that by various kinds of financial manipulation the builder could pocket the difference between the loan and his building costs.

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Witnesses In McCarthy Row Quizzed

WASHINGTON (AP)—Secret questioning of witnesses was ordered today in the row between Sen. McCarthy (R-Wis.) and top Army officials who have filed a new "bill of particulars" accusing the senator of improper pressure tactics.

An informed source said the Army's detailed statement of its case, handed to the Senate investigations subcommittee yesterday, was "stronger against McCarthy than the original report, which touched off the inquiry."

The subcommittee, working against time to get the public hearings started on schedule a week from today, declined to name witnesses called a closed session today, or to disclose just where or when they would be questioned.

Sen. Mundt (R-S.D.), succeeding McCarthy temporarily as subcommittee chairman, told newsmen the group's special staff had orders to start "examining the witnesses and evidence" while the senators themselves grapple with problems of procedure.

These include the role McCarthy will play in the inquiry.

Mundt said he will call an extraordinary Easter Sunday meeting of the subcommittee to explore that with McCarthy if the Wisconsin senator returns by then from his trip to Arizona and Texas.

The subcommittee and the Army refused to make public the seven-page typed statement of the Army's case, but an informed source said that it stuck tightly to the Army's original allegations that McCarthy and some staff aides used pressure tactics in efforts to win favored treatment for Pvt. G. David Schine.

The source said the new statement of charges is "more specific" in alleging that McCarthy backed the hand of Roy M. Cohn, the subcommittee's chief counsel, in seeking a commission and special assignment in New York for Schine. Before he was drafted last November, Schine was an unpaid consultant to the subcommittee.

McCarthy and Cohn disputed the accusations, and leveled countercharges of a "blackmail" effort in the Pentagon aimed at blocking further investigations by the subcommittee into alleged Communist infiltration of the Army. They named Secretary of the Army Robert T. Stevens and John G. Adams, Army general counsel.

McCarthy, Cohn and others the Army accused have yet to file with the subcommittee formal statements of what they hope to prove.

Meanwhile, Sen. Dirksen (R-Ill.) told reporters he planned more talks with parliamentarians and others to prepare for the writing of ground rules under which the inquiry will proceed.

McCarthy already has stepped temporarily aside as chairman and has agreed not to vote on matters concerning the inquiry. But it still is not clear just what status he will have and whether he will cross-examine witnesses.

Wife Charged With Poison Attempt

WHITESBURG, Ky. (AP)—The Letcher County grand jury yesterday returned an indictment charging a wife with feeding her husband rat poison in a bottle of soda pop.

The true bill against Mrs. Martha Conner, about 35, charged her with "malicious poisoning."

Her husband, Willie Conner, a coal miner about 40, became violently ill last October and was in a critical condition for several weeks. He is fully recovered.

Investigating officers said the Conners had been arguing shortly before Conner became ill.

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