Fails to Have "Impersonator" Tag Removed From Records

License Board Continues "Manny" Diaz Hearing; Police Chief Presses Complaint

LOWELL—Because there is no time limitation on the stigma of notoriety in the Lowell ordinance that bans female impersonators, Manuel D. "Manny" Diaz last night failed to convince the Lowell license commission that his reputation should be cleared officially.

"Manny," native Lowell night club entertainer and emcee who has been banned from night spots in Dracut, Lowell and Billerica, told the commissioners last night that he impersonated a woman in an act 14 years ago, but never since that time.

Commissioners William F. Barrett and Willis J. Peltier continued Diaz's hearing for one week because Chairman Robert J. Lewis was unable to attend the hearing last night. The hearing had been continued from June 1 when Diaz originally appealed to the commission to remove him in the eyes of city officials and police so that he could back to work.

Police Chief Testifies

Represented by Atty. Archie Barlofsky, Diaz contended that he should not now be banned from working because of something that happened 14 years ago. The commissioners and Police Supt. John T. Sayers held firm to the letter of the recent Lowell city ordinance, however.

The ordinance "...prohibits the hiring of known and reputed female impersonators in Lowell establishments that have entertainment licenses." Sayers declared that he has personal knowledge that Diaz did impersonate a woman on one occasion about 15 years ago in an act. Diaz later said that he had not done so for 14 years.

The chief interpreted the ordinance to mean that anybody who was ever known to have been a female impersonator, regardless of the date of the impersonation, is included in the ban.

Diaz, natty in blue suede shoes, a light suit and a blue ascot, argued personally and through Atty. Barlofsky, that he formerly worked in a Lowell night spot for two years and for four years in a Dracut club without attracting the wrath of the law.

He said that he was born and raised in Lowell, owns property and lives here, and declared that "I'm not going out of town until this thing is cleared up—until I'm cleared."

"Manny," who was recently billed as "The Blond Bombshell," complained that he has lost $2,000 by being unemployed for 10 weeks.

Public Interest Runs High

Commissioner Barrett revealed the public interest in the case when he said that he has received more telephone calls concerning Diaz's hearing than about any other case heard in the time he has served on the commission. Most of the calls were favorable to Diaz, he added.

Police Chief Sayers held firm to his conviction that "Manny" should not be cleared. He contended that his opposition to Diaz is caused by the "crowd he attracts," not by the conduct or character of Diaz himself. He said, in answer to Atty. Barlofsky's question, that he has never known of any complaints against Diaz personally.

At this point, Barlofsky charged that the Lowell ban on Diaz merely followed the lead of the Dracut selectmen who closed up the night spot in which Diaz was working.

The question arose as to whether Diaz was banned in Dracut or whether the entertainment at the club there was banned.

Barlofsky stated that several of the Dracut club performers were convicted in Lowell district court recently of charges of participating in an immoral show. Diaz was found innocent of all charges at that time.

Barlofsky argued that if no evidence of female impersonation by Diaz could be presented, both Dracut and Lowell officials were unfair in their actions. Barlofsky claimed that the Lowell ordinance pertains to the present, not to "ancient history."

Sayers' Claims

At this point in the hour-long hearing, Chief Sayers left the hearing chamber to make a telephone call.

He returned to say that he had just learned that:
1. The entertainment license of the Dracut club where Diaz had worked had been revoked following the "immoral show" incident.
2. The club's license has recently been reissued with the understanding that Diaz will not be employed there again.
3. The Dracut selectmen did not state whether or not Diaz would be allowed to work within the town as an entertainer in the future.

4. That before he could be employed as an entertainer in a Dracut establishment again he would have to appear before the selectmen.

Diaz said that he doesn't want to go back to Dracut, anyway. He wants to work in Lowell, his "home town" so that he can help care for his elderly father who is now ill, he said.

Claims "Undesirables" Attracted

During Chief Sayers' explanation that Diaz attracts a following, some of whom are undesirable characters, it was disclosed that Diaz's appearance at a night spot seems to insure a good volume of business. When he arrives, business booms; when he leaves, business, in at least one spot in which he has worked, dies.

Chief Sayers clarified his position further by stating that it is not the conduct of certain followers of Diaz on the premises of the spots where he works, but their conduct and their immoral influence on Lowell citizens after the customers leave the club, that is what he wishes to prevent.