



News Letter

LIBRARY

Local 30, United Federal Workers of America (C.I.O.)

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1941 APPROPRIATION ASSURE SALARY INCREASES AND GENERAL RECLASSIFICATION

150 New Positions -- Increases within the Grades -- Permanent Classification

As far as the LC staff is concerned, the report of the House Committee on Appropriations is one of the most hopeful documents ever issued. Never before has a congressional committee approached the Library's fiscal problems with a more sympathetic understanding. The appropriation represents a generous compromise between the request so effectively presented by the Librarian and the committee's natural concern for economical disposition of government funds.

Although the amount recommended is less than that asked for, it is still sufficient to permit considerable improvement in salaries. The 150 new positions granted, if filled by promotions from within the service, will mean salary increases for many members of the staff.

In addition, the action of the committee in not deducting "vacancies" from the appropriation will make available about \$20,000, which can be used for increases within the grades.

Of even far-reaching significance than these immediate increases is the virtual assurance that all positions in the Library will be reclassified. This the committee provided for in two ways. In the first place, it pointed out that, under the Classification Act, it is the duty of the Civil Service Commission to carry on the classification of LC positions with request of the Librarian and it directed that this be done "expeditiously and thoroughly...prior to, or concurrently with, the induction of the incumbents in new positions which are provided for in this bill."

Secondly, the committee set up a new position in the Personnel Office, the incumbent of which is to devote his full time to classifying Library positions. This provision gives their promise that in the near future salaries will be more equitably distributed, on the basis of "equal pay for equal work."

Although the Librarian's request for

\$100,000 for increases within the grades for 301 employees was not granted, the promised reclassification should go far toward accomplishing the same result. This happy outcome will be further facilitated by the agreement between the union and the administration providing for a Classification Appeals Board, consisting of two representatives of the union and two of the administration.

The \$400,000 increase over last year's appropriation will accomplish far more than salary increases for many of the staff. It will make it possible for the Librarian and the staff to render much better service to Congress and to the nation. For this greatly improved state of affairs gratitude is due to Congress. But to Mr. MacLish, for his remarkable mastery of our problems in the short time he has been in office and for his far-sighted presentation to Congress of the needs of the Library, all LC employees will wish to express their highest admiration and pledge their loyal support.

The faculty of the Federal Workers School, on which LC has five representatives, will entertain Mrs. Roosevelt at a luncheon in her honor at the May-Aston House on May 14th.

ALL OUT FOR THE OPENING GAME
of the LC baseball season at the South Illinois after work next Monday, April 23rd.

ONE PROVINCIAL WINCHELL REPORTS THAT

OUTLAW PRESIDENT ADDRESSES 10 WORKERS

CLAUDE L. KIRBY, back attendant, left the service early this month and returned to his home in Greenwood, Miss.

A fire which broke out last month in the apartment of Dr. GEORGE AMMER, of Study Reference, caused much damage.

Dr. AMMER, chief of the Orientalia Division, was last month elected president of the American Oriental Society.

BARBARA GLENN, in charge of Desk 45, has been conducting the book-review department, the best feature of News, a locally published magazine.

Dr. ROBERT C. SMITH, acting director of the Hispanic Foundation during Dr. Brown's absence, has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship to enable him to compile a volume on the fine arts in Brazil from the simplest to the present time, with special reference to the folk art of the Indians and Negroes. He plans to go to Brazil probably next spring.

Miss ETHEL R. SYLVIA, who specialized in Spanish at Smith College (M.A. 1930), studied in Spain, taught Spanish and has covered of Portuguese also, has been appointed secretary to Dr. Kuhn during Miss Mathews' year of absence for study in Chile. Miss Sylvia was for two years on the staff of the Boston Public Library, engaged in special work in the Eberhard Spanish collection and with rare books in other Romance languages.

CHARLES GATLEMAN, who suffered a serious eye injury while at work on Feb. 14, has returned to his post in Legislative Reference. His many friends on the staff will be distressed to learn that, contrary to earlier expectations, he has lost the use of one eye. Fortunately, the sight of the other is unimpaired. The compensation law, as it applies to Federal employees in such cases, does not provide any compensation other than the cost of medical care. Employees in industry and in most states and cities are better covered by accident compensation.

The end of the IC bowling series was a whirlwind finish, with five teams fighting to "place" and the first three reaching in 8:00 until the last pin fell. Gentry, captained by Jimmy Walker, took first place, with Lowell and Archures in second and third positions respectively.

"There is one thing I am sure of," Kenneth Crawford, national president of the Newspaper Guild, declared at an open meeting of Local 58 on March 19, "and that is, that the union of the working newspaper men and women of America will remain in the CIO. We have come to see, as have you, that our own security is bound up with that of the least secure."

Crawford outlined the development of the Guild, the reasons for its decision that it could get nowhere as an independent union and its subsequent affiliation, first with the AF of L and later with the CIO. The newspapermen realized, he said, that they would be powerless to resist the attacks of the publishers if they remained independent, whereas "in union there is strength."

He spoke of the early efforts of the Guild leaders, under Raymond Brown, to overcome the false argument that "white-collar workers" did not need a union.

"We finally overcame that misleading propaganda," he declared, "just as you are overcoming it among the government workers." — N.M.J.

The union could accomplish more if it had your help.

AS EXHIBIT NO 10 WORKER SHOULD MISS

Some of the striking facts brought out in the WPA exhibit now on display in the Main Building may give you quite a jolt. Three million Americans are illiterate. One-fourth of our people have no access to library facilities.

The records of one-third of the counties of the USA have not been inventoried.

The exhibit also tells what WPA has been doing about this.

In 1900 there were 6,180,000 illiterates in the USA; in 1930, 4,383,783 - 30% improvement in 30 years. Today there are 2,363,783 - 36% drop in 5 years.

Over 3,000 research and records projects in all 48 states, employing 75,000 persons, are being operated by WPA; 28 state guidebooks have been published, 27 more are soon to appear.

There are a lot more startling statistics where these come from. The exhibit is well worth half an hour of your time.

LOCAL 28 STATES ITS IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

At its March membership meeting Local 28, UFWA, unanimously adopted the following as its immediate objectives for the staff of the Library of Congress:

1 - Periodic reclassification of library positions. It has been nearly a generation since the last general classification. With the Civil Service Commission directed to reclassify positions at the request of the Librarian and with provision in the 1941 appropriation for a classifier permanently attached to the staff, systematic and continuous review of classifications would be feasible.

2 - Salary increases for underpaid employees. While reclassification will automatically remedy many instances of inequity, several categories call for special attention. Among the dock attendants, for example, where promotion to the central dock is necessarily slow, increases within the grade should be liberalized. It should be made possible for a competent dock attendant to rise to \$1440 and \$1680 if no better position is available. The same should be true of the guard force. It would be possible to give the shoreman a living wage if arrangements were made for full-time employment for those who want it, instead of the three hours' work a day which they have at present.

3 - A centralized personnel policy, which includes in-service training, (a) Promotions from within and (c) An objective efficiency rating system.

(a) Lectures are aids to training, but they are not the essence of training. In-service training, whether in cataloging, reference work, language study or what have you, must be carried on in small groups, with personal participation, directed study and practice.

(b) The policy of promotions from within the staff was endorsed by the Librarian in his conference with the union last November. The union hopes to see it become the established practice. Promotion of a member of the staff often permits of other promotions down the line, with resultant encouragement to all, whereas the appointment of outsiders over the heads of faithful and qualified employees causes general demoralization.

(c) The present efficiency-rating form leaves too much play for personal bias and subjective impressionism. It should be replaced by more objective methods of measuring efficiency, such as are being worked out in other government agencies.

4 - An appeals board to handle matters of classification, efficiency ratings, etc. The establishment of such a board, already agreed to by the Librarian, marks a long step toward effective democracy in the library. The union will cooperate in every way to ensure the successful functioning of the board and its general acceptance as a valuable part of the administrative machinery.

5 - No discrimination on account of race, sex, religion, or political opinions or affiliations. A great deal of mere lip-service is paid to this basic democratic principle. The union maintains that it should be taken seriously and observed scrupulously, without fear or favor.

6 - Democratic participation by all the employees of each division in deciding questions of policy and procedure. Genuine democracy means more than the right to cast a ballot on election day. Still more important, though seldom recognized, is the right to have a voice in determining the conditions under which we do our daily work. A creative share in the common task raises the worker from a mere cog to the rank of a partner.

With senators, congressmen and other notables succeeding one another as guest speakers, the Staff Luncheon Committee has kept up its commendable work with steadily mounting success. It is even rumored that an attempt may be made to secure Mrs. Roosevelt as the guest of honor before the cafeteria season closes. On April 23 the universally beloved and respected Monsignor John A. Ryan will speak on "Can Unemployment Be Ended?"

We will give a year's free subscription to anyone sending in an answer to the following questionnaire which union can exert more influence in all matters concerning its members, one that has no contact with the rest of the labor movement or one that is closely affiliated with millions of workers throughout the country - "Back home," where the votes come from!

SOCIAL PROGRAM OF LOCAL CIO ORGANIZATION AN OPEN CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

At a meeting rally in Central High School on April 10 the Washington Industrial Union Council of the CIO launched a vigorous campaign for the following:

1. Liberalizing unemployment compensation benefits. 2. A larger DC budget, particularly in relief. 3. A DC labor department. 4. Local self-government for the District. 5. Support of the CIOA campaign against ruinous economy. 6. A solid sales tax for a DC income tax.

The meeting endorsed the CIO demand that the Roosevelt Administration:

1. Keep America out of war. 2. Take measures to solve the unemployment problem. 3. Preserve and strengthen the Wagner Act. 4. Liberalize and extend the social security program. 5. Support the Wagner Health Bill.

Mr. MacLeish has appointed Mr. W.C. Ford, Superintendent of Buildings, and Mr. Earl F. Ferdinand, Catalog Division, both philatelists of outstanding ability, to prepare the Library of Congress Postage Stamp Centenary exhibition of philatelic literature. This exhibition, which will be opened at a reception on May 4, is a part of the Postage Stamp Centenary Celebration sponsored by the Washington Philatelic Society in conjunction with the American Philatelic Society. In selecting the items to be shown, Mr. Ford and Mr. Ferdinand have been making a thorough examination of all the books and pamphlets on stamps available in the Library of Congress.

SAVING SO DESTROY, NOT PRESERVE HUMANITY

Analysing the "ruinous economy" being urged in certain influential quarters, the urge of the Chicago Public Library union points out that this economy is to be practiced at the expense of "education, health, housing, work relief, public works and other needs of the people, but not... guns and bullets or loans to foreign governments." To offset these warlike expenditures, millions of Americans are thrown out of work, WPA rolls are being slashed and relief funds cut, the Wagner health and housing programs thrown overboard and aid for education and libraries scuttled.

We wonder what the editorial hack on the N.Y. Herald Tribune who wrote last June that the appointment of Mr. MacLeish was "a shocking animation, an outrage, an affront to common sense and decency" thought when he read in the report of the House Committee on Appropriations:

"It is proper that the committee should frankly state its pleasure at the industrious and intelligent manner in which Mr. MacLeish has entered upon his duties. In a short time he has acquired an working intimacy with the functions of the Library and the details of its operation."

Or when he heard that reprobated Republican Representative Flinley, who had opposed confirmation of the nomination, rose in the House to "make public acknowledgment of his error" - said apologetically.

If the Herald Tribune has likewise done public penance for its "error," the fact has escaped our editorial eye.

Despite the continuing depression, the CIO, thanks to its militant spirit and its industrial form of organization, has gained substantial concessions from a number of powerful anti-union corporations, including Bethlehem Steel, the Associated Press, Republic Steel, Popcorn Mfg. Co., Shell Oil Co.

WE ACHIEVE INEQUALITY

The Periodical Division has requested two complete sets of Off the Shelf, the predecessor of the LC News Letter, for binding and addition to the permanent collection. In the past depression times WPA workers doing research on the origins of labor unionism at LC will refer to them as "source material."

Any persons having back numbers of Off the Shelf which they are willing to part with are urged to turn them in to Order Kelley in the Reading Room.

The proprietors of the Catholic Worker having rejected the offer of the Department of Labor to arrange for arbitration - the civilized manner of settling disputes - the situation remains as reported in our last issue.

A strong union protects your living.