

**PROCEEDINGS AT THE 38TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM
LEAGUE HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11,
1919. PROCEEDINGS AT THE ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CIVIL
SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE HELD AT
PHILADELPHIA, PA., DEC. 2, 1915**

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NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE LEAGUE

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Proceedings
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Morning Session at the City Club

Hon. Frank M. Riter, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Association, presiding.

The presiding officer delivered an address of welcome to the delegates and guests.

For the Pennsylvania Association:

Mr. Wood presented the report of the Treasurer, which was accepted and ordered printed.

Mr. Waldo reported for the Committee on Nominations, and on motion the candidates named were unanimously elected.

For the League:

Reports of Associations and Auxiliaries were rendered as follows:

Maryland Auxiliary, Mrs. Sioussat.

Maryland Association, Mr. Buck. Mr. Buck read a letter from Mr. Bonaparte, expressing regret at his inability to be present, and on motion of Mr. Dana it was directed that a resolution of appreciation be sent to Mr. Bonaparte.

Massachusetts Auxiliary, Miss Nichols.

Chicago and Illinois Associations, Mr. Griffenhagen.

Connecticut Association, Mr. Farnam.

New Jersey Association, Mr. Hammond.

Massachusetts Association, Mr. Dana.

Indiana Association, Mr. Foulke.

New York Association, Mr. Spencer.

Pennsylvania Association, Mr. Rosengarten.

Buffalo Auxiliary, Miss Truscott (by letter).

Dr. Anna W. Hochfelder, chairman of the Civil Service Committee of the New York City Federation of Women's Clubs, addressed the meeting.

Mr. Albert Smith Faught gave a report on the civil service provisions of the proposed new Philadelphia charter.

The Secretary of the League reported briefly on the progress of civil service reform in Colorado, Washington and Oregon, and read a telegram of greetings from the new Washington Civil Service Reform Association.

Luncheon Session at the City Club

Mrs. Imogen B. Oakley, Chairman of the Luncheon Committee, acted as temporary chairman, and after a brief address introduced the presiding officer, Hon. Clarence L. Harper.

State Senator George Woodward was the principal speaker.

Informal addresses were made by Mr. E. O. Griffenhagen of Chicago and Col. William G. Rice of Albany, president of the New York State Civil Service Commission.

The following report of the Committee on Resolutions was offered by Mr. Burnham, in the absence of the chairman of the committee, Mr. Hardon:

I.

The most dangerous menace that has threatened the integrity and even existence of the merit system since its establishment confronts the country today in the movement for "veteran preference" in the civil service of the nation, States and cities. The National Civil Service Reform League favors the most ample direct recognition of the men and women who have served their country in time of war. It believes that full account of experience and special aptitudes developed by war service should be taken in testing the ability of candidates for civil administration. But it opposes all forms of arbitrary credit or preference, which pass over those demonstrating their superior fitness for public work and entrust the people's business as a reward for other virtues to persons of inferior qualifications. Such a system of preference violates the basic principle of democracy and equal opportunity for which the world war was fought. It ignores the lesson of the selective service taught by the organization of our military forces, whose achievements depended on the selection for every task of the fittest agent, without favor and for no reason but his fitness. The advocates of veteran preference, making use of the noble enthusiasm of the people over their returning heroes, are engaged in a campaign which is chiefly useful to politicians anxious to capture soldier votes and which if successful will serve the spoilsmen and discredit the merit system by preserving its name while destroying its spirit.

II.

The railroads, telegraph, telephone and cable lines are now in the hands of the Government. If all or any of these are to remain as part of the public service the matter of em-

ployment in them must be controlled under the merit system and regulated by such special rules as may be necessary in each case. No plan for Government ownership or continued operations can safely be adopted unless it includes full provision to prevent political manipulation and to define the rights and public duties of all employes. In private management these services have been under a practical sort of merit control, for which the spoils system must not be substituted.

III.

All international representatives of the United States should be selected on the basis of their fitness for the positions to which they are appointed. This is especially applicable to any and every position on special commissions, international tribunals and in connection with a League of Nations. It is also highly important that the merit system be extended by law so far as possible into diplomatic and consular services, in view of the greater international duties which they must now undertake.

IV.

The League calls attention with approval to the recent action of Congress in creating the Joint Congressional Commission on the Reclassification of the Civil Service. No personnel work in the Government is now more important than this. For many years the service has been seriously handicapped for lack of modern business methods of this character. The Commission cannot properly perform its work without recommendations as to salaries, and the League urges prompt consideration of this subject, especially in the Post Office, where an early adjustment is essential to the welfare of the service.

V.

The League urges the classification by law of the higher administrative offices, particularly the Collectors of Customs and of Internal Revenue, and the United States marshals; the extension of the merit system over all positions in the District of Columbia; the termination of special exceptions through executive order, save where the need is shown to the Civil Service Commission in public hearing.

VI

The army found it necessary to adopt an extensive system to put "the right man in the right place." The army has followed up this work by the adoption of a new plan for promotions. Industries throughout the country have found that expert employment management is essential to their operation. In like manner the merit system must be developed and extended to control promotions, discharges, conditions of labor and standardization.

Afternoon Session at the City Club

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dana presiding):

As President of the League I am very glad to welcome the people who have been willing to speak to us this afternoon, Congressman Edward Keating of Colorado, Secretary of the Joint Congressional Committee on Reclassification of the Federal Civil Service; the Hon. George R. Wales, one of the newly appointed United States Civil Service Commissioners. He has long been chief examiner, and still before that was in other positions in the Civil Service Commission, so that he knows the civil service system from, you may say, the bottom to the top. And then also representatives of the employes, Luther C. Steward, Esq., President of the National Federation of Federal Employes, and Miss Ethel M. Smith, representing the National Women's Trade Union League.

I will first call upon Mr. Keating.

MR. KEATING:

I had expected that Senator Jones, who is Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Reclassification of Salaries, would be here this afternoon and make an address. He found it impossible to leave Washington at this time, and he asked me to tell you how much he regretted his inability to be present, and to say to you that the Commission will welcome any suggestions this organization, or other associations interested, may make concerning the work of the Commission.

There is one hopeful thing about this Commission—the members realized from the very beginning that they did not know all that was to be known about reclassification, and that this was especially true of the technical side of reclassification. However, they did realize the need of reclassification, and they felt that the Federal Government was entitled to as thorough a job as it was possible to secure. So Senator Jones has told me to say to you that the work of reclassification under his direction will not be a hit-or-miss proposition, but as thorough-going as he can make it.

First of all as to the work of the Commission. The Commission was created by a rider which was attached to the legislative, executive and judicial bill, approved by the President on March 1, 1919. It provided that the Commission should consist of three Senators and three Representatives of the 65th Congress. The Commission was appointed and organized with Senator Jones as Chairman and myself as Secretary. Our jurisdiction is confined to Government employes in the District of Columbia. We will not undertake to