

**HAND-ROLLER V. POWER PRESSES.
HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON
PRINTING, UNITED STATES SENATE,
SIXTY-SECOND CONGRESS ON S. 4239,
JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 14, 1912**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649598960

Hand-Roller v. Power Presses. Hearing Before the Committee on Printing, United States Senate, Sixty-Second Congress on S. 4239, January 29 - February 14, 1912 by United States Senate Committee on Printing

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

**HAND-ROLLER V. POWER PRESSES.
HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON
PRINTING, UNITED STATES SENATE,
SIXTY-SECOND CONGRESS ON S. 4239,
JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 14, 1912**

HAND-ROLLER v. POWER PRESSES

HR 573
A4
1912 &

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON PRINTING ³⁹⁴/₇₃₁
UNITED STATES SENATE

SIXTY-SECOND CONGRESS

ON

S. 4239

A BILL TO AMEND, REVISE, AND CODIFY THE LAWS RELATING
TO THE PUBLIC PRINTING AND BINDING AND THE DIS-
TRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 14, 1912

Printed for the use of the Committee on Printing

WITH INDEX

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1912

COMMITTEE ON PRINTING.

HARRY A. RICHARDSON, Delaware, *Chairman.*

REED SMOOT, Utah. JOHN WALTER SMITH, Maryland.
JACOB H. GALLINGER, New Hampshire. DUNCAN U. FLETCHER, Florida.
CARROLL S. PAGE, Vermont. WILLIAM E. CHILTON, West Virginia.
WILLIAM S. KENYON, Iowa.

W. D. DENNEY, *Clerk.*

J. O. JONES, *Assistant Clerk.*

HAND-ROLLER v. POWER PRESSES.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1912.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON PRINTING,
Washington, D. C.

The committee met at 7.30 p. m.

Present: Senators Smoot (acting chairman), Gallinger, Page, Kenyon, and Chilton.

Hon. Benjamin K. Focht, a member of the Joint Committee on Printing, also attended.

There were present also: Hon. A. Piatt Andrew, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury; Mr. Joseph E. Ralph, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; Mr. William Clark, president of the Steel and Copper Plate Printers' Union of North America, Local No. 2; Mr. S. E. Beach, chairman of the executive committee of the Plate Printers' Union; Mr. Jackson H. Ralston, attorney for the Plate Printers' Union; Mr. Frank E. Ferguson, assistant director; Mr. William C. McKinney, chief, printing division; and Mr. Charles H. Randall, foreman power-press section, Bureau of Engraving and Printing; and a delegation of plate printers.

In the absence of Senator Richardson, chairman of the committee, Senator Smoot, upon the motion of Senator Gallinger, duly seconded, was chosen as acting chairman.

Senator Smoot (acting chairman). Members of the committee and gentlemen, this meeting has been called for the purpose of hearing representatives of the plate printers' union and others who may desire to speak, or are interested in the question before the committee, which is as to the desirability of using power presses instead of hand presses in the printing of currency.

I wish to say in the beginning that it is and shall be the intention of this committee to hear everybody desiring to be heard. They will be given all the time they desire, and if we can not get through tonight we will have other meetings. So far as I am personally concerned, testimony shall be taken until it is demonstrated, if such a thing should happen, and I do not think it will, that there is only an inclination to delay. I want every person interested in this question to have all the time to speak he may desire. It is one that not only affects the plate printers, but affects the interests of the Government. I do not believe there is a member of this committee who wishes to injure anyone. The committee has the interests of all concerned at heart.

Invitations were extended to the following persons to be here tonight: Members, of course, of the Senate Committee on Printing; members of the House Committee on Printing; the Secretary of the Treasury; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Hon. A. Piatt Andrew, who is in charge of the fiscal division of the Treasury Department; Mr. Joseph E. Ralph, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; Mr. Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor; Mr. William Clark, president of the Steel and Copper Plate Printers' Union, accompanied by a committee and attorney; and members of the printing division of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing—namely, Mr. William C. McKinney, chief of the printing

Ca. 7. 5. Money 24/12.
HG 573
A9
1912 L

division, and Mr. Charles H. Randall, foreman of a power-press section.

I am in receipt of a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, stating that on account of a previous engagement he can not attend the meeting to-night, but will be represented by the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Andrews. I am also in receipt of a letter from Mr. Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, stating that on account of a meeting compelling him to be in New York this evening it will be impossible for him to be here, but that he will be represented by the legislative committee of the American Federation of Labor.

At this point, gentlemen of the committee, if you have no objection, I will offer as a part of these hearings the hearings had and the report made thereon in the Fiftieth Congress, second session, when this same question was gone into most carefully. This is a hearing of much importance; it has been referred to in the public press, and I believe every Member of the House and every Member of the Senate will want at least a copy of that hearing and the report thereon for their information. Therefore, I believe that the entire proceedings to which I have called attention should be made a part of these hearings.

Senator GALLINGER. Those are the hearings had before the Senate Finance Committee, which were printed, are they not?

Senator SMOOT. That is correct; and Senator Hiscock, of New York, made the report. The hearings were held in 1888 and 1889. If there be no objection, I shall offer them as a part of these proceedings.

There was no objection, and the hearings and report thereon (S. Rept. No. 2604, 50th Cong., 2d sess.) were printed separately as an appendix to these hearings.

Senator SMOOT (continuing). We have no special program mapped out, but I suppose that in justice to the plate printers, they being deeply interested in this subject, some statement should be made as to why this move has been taken, the object of it, and what we expect to accomplish by it. That being the case, I believe that it is only fitting and proper that Mr. Ralph, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, should make the first statement.

Senator GALLINGER. Mr. Chairman, before Mr. Ralph proceeds, I think it would be well to put in the record the existing law and the modification of it that is proposed in the bill.

Senator SMOOT. If there be no objection the existing law and the proposed modification thereof will be put in the record at this point.

There was no objection, and the existing law and proposed modification are as follows:

Reported bill.

SEC. 85. Hereafter all bonds, notes, and checks shall be printed from intaglio plates on presses of such style and character as may be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury: *Provided*, That should the Secretary of the Treasury decide to print bonds, notes, and checks on other presses than hand-roller presses, not more than one-fifth of the total number of hand-roller presses now employed in printing such bonds, notes, and checks shall be displaced in any one fiscal year.

Present law.

Provided further. That hereafter all bonds, notes, and checks shall be printed from hand-roller presses. (30 Stat. L., 605, July 1, 1888.)

STATEMENT OF MR. JOSEPH E. RALPH, DIRECTOR BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.

Mr. RALPH. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I suppose this is a hearing on the so-called Smoot printing bill which contains a provision for the introduction of power presses at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, specifying how they shall be introduced, and so forth?

Senator SMOOT. Yes; that provision is found in section 85 of the bill.

Mr. RALPH. Yes, sir. Now, Mr. Chairman, what was the statement you desired me to make?

Senator SMOOT. We desire you to make a statement, Mr. Ralph, a full statement, of what we expect to accomplish by a change in the present law, the economies we wish to effect, whether the proposed change is a feasible one, whether there is any greater likelihood of currency printed upon power presses being counterfeited than that printed upon hand presses, and any other question that may suggest itself to your mind, or that may be asked of you later on.

Mr. RALPH. Mr. Chairman, I desire first to offer my letter, addressed to you under date of January 31, 1911, relative to your bill, and to ask that it be made a part of my statement.

There being no objection it was so ordered, and the letter referred to is as follows:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING,
January 31, 1911.

Sir: In response to your request for an expression of opinion from me as to the practicability of printing United States notes and certificates on power presses instead of on hand-roller presses, as provided by the requirements of the act of July 1, 1898, I have the honor to state that heretofore I have been opposed to the repeal of the legislation provided for in the aforesaid act, for humanitarian reasons.

I feel proud of the splendid character of the men employed in this bureau as plate printers. They are above the average artisan intellectually and otherwise. Nearly all of these men entered the service through the Civil Service Commission, believing that they had a life tenure of position so long as they faithfully and efficiently performed their duties. A great majority of these men, in fact nearly all of them, are now paying for homes which they have purchased. It is also true a great majority of them have passed the middle age of life, and to separate any portion of them from the positions which they now hold, through no fault of their own, by the introduction of improved machines would, in my judgment, be a calamity and work a great hardship upon the men thrown out of employment. Hence, under those conditions, I would not recommend the repeal of that act on my own motion.

But, inasmuch as you intend to provide in your codification of the printing laws a proviso that no good and efficient man now employed as a plate printer in this bureau shall be displaced through the introduction of power presses, I am willing to go on record and state that in my opinion there is no doubt that the backs of notes and certificates and the backs of national-bank notes can be printed in a satisfactory manner on power presses, and in a style that will just as well safeguard the Government against counterfeiting as by printing them on hand-roller presses.

The specimens of \$1 silver certificate faces recently printed on power presses for use of your committee were the first faces of notes ever printed on power presses in this bureau, and because of the hurry of producing them they were printed under adverse conditions for the press. The excellent results obtained, however, under these unfavorable conditions clearly show that it will be practicable to print faces in a perfectly satisfactory manner, with a single exception—that it is possible that the plates will show greater wear on the power press than on the hand-roller press, which would necessarily shorten the life of the plate; but this can be overcome by engraving the lines of the design of face plates to a greater depth and width, so as to increase the life of the plate.

The good appearance of these faces printed on power presses is shown by comparing them with the specimens of hand-press work also submitted, and which were executed

in the proving room of the engraving division of the bureau under the best possible conditions and which represent the highest grade of the art of hand plate printing. In the proving room the provers, who are plate printers, are paid per diem wages and can therefore do their work in a deliberate manner with the view to obtaining perfection in every print, while the regular work of the bureau is executed by printers who are paid piece rates and who are naturally anxious to produce the greatest quantity in order to receive the highest compensation and, in fact, on account of the scarcity of first-class printers they are stimulated in exerting their efforts to increase the product of their day's work by the officers of this bureau, and the average quality of their work is therefore not equal to that work which might be termed the highest class of the art done by the provers.

If the matter of using the power press on bonds, notes, and checks were left to my discretion I should, without hesitation, print the backs of the notes on the power press with a guaranty that the standard now being maintained by the bureau would not be lowered, and in the course of time, having in view the retention in the service of all good and efficient men now employed, I would endeavor to print the faces also on the power presses, and if I should find that the quality of the work executed by the power press was not equal to the average standard of hand-roller presswork, I would then continue to print the faces on hand-roller presses operated by a motor.

I feel confident that the power presses could be introduced in such units as not to jeopardize the employment of men now borne on the rolls of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing as plate printers, especially as the provision in your bill which provides that not more than 20 per cent of the work now executed on hand-roller presses shall be displaced in any one year is not mandatory, and if it was felt that the positions of any of the men now employed were to be vacated by the maintenance of that percentage the Secretary of the Treasury and the executive officer of the bureau could, under this provision, displace a less number of hand presses if necessary. The possibility of the exercise of this discretion would be reduced, however, by the fact that the number of available printers would be decreased to some extent by printers engaging in other employment, by death, and by discontinuing the employment of apprentices until such time as the force now employed had been provided for.

The demands on this bureau by the Treasurer of the United States for the present year are such that if the appropriation would permit, and the capacity of the bureau could be expanded to meet the demands, I would deliver the Treasurer 50 per cent in excess of the amount estimated for. This unusual demand is brought about, not only by the expansion of the business of our country, but is also due to the fact that the people are becoming educated to the needs and the advantages of cleaner money, and the money is being sent in for redemption in such large quantities that the Treasurer is unable to redeem it, and this bureau unable to execute the necessary amount of new notes.

I really believe that the repeal of the statutory provision which regulates the printing of our bonds, notes, and checks, which the plate printers might consider a calamity, would in five years prove a great blessing to the men of this craft now employed in the bureau. The material advantages to a printer on a power press, as compared to the hand press, are that on a power press he is enabled to perform a greater quantity of work with less physical labor, and at the same time earn from 30 to 40 per cent more in wages per day, and it is a notorious fact in the administration of the bureau that the printers, after working regularly on power presses, exhibit the greatest reluctance to operate hand presses. The same arguments with regard to lowering the standard of printing were advanced by printers when it was proposed to print revenue stamps on power presses, but these stamps have now been for some time successfully printed on the power presses.

Postage stamps are also very satisfactorily printed on power presses, and the improvement in the life of the plates by engraving a design suitable for power-press printing is conclusively shown by comparison between the life of the plates used for printing the present series of stamps and those used for printing the previous series, plates for the latter producing only an average of 68,000 sheets, while a plate of the present series will produce an average of 236,000 sheets, this result being brought about principally by adopting a suitable design of engraving with greater breadth and depth of lines without a sacrifice of any essential features as to security, beauty, etc., but is also due to some improvement in the wiper and other features of the press. The work produced by the power presses on the classes of stamps printed thereon has been so satisfactory there has been little or no incentive toward improving the operation of the presses, but if the backs and faces of notes were printed on these presses there would be an inducement to improve them, and this would no doubt be accomplished.

While the backs of bank notes, as above stated, can be printed on power presses as well as the backs of notes and certificates, it would not be feasible to print the faces of

HAND-ROLLER VS. POWER PRESSES.

9 7

bank notes thereon for the reason that such notes for the many banks are of different designs, for which small orders are received which would not permit long runs as desired on power presses, and this same statement applies to bonds which, as a rule, are ordered in small quantities and vary in their wording. There would, therefore, even if the power presses were required for printing faces as well as backs of notes, be a necessity for at least 100 hand-plate printing presses for the national-currency faces and for bonds.

Respectfully,

J. E. RALPH, *Director.*

Hon. REED SMOOT,

Chairman Committee on Printing, United States Senate.

Mr. RALPH (continuing). I wish to state, and to state it as emphatically as possible, that if I felt that by the introduction of power presses injury would accrue to a single plate printer, I would shirk the duty imposed upon me to-night.

I have been a friend of the plate printers, Mr. Chairman, ever since I have been in the bureau, and they have been my friends. I have been a workman, and I have been identified with organized labor all my life. I am a friend of organized labor, and I am a friend of the men who are assembled here to-night. And rather than being a calamity, as the men interpret it, I wish to go on record as saying that if this bill passes, and five years hence all the work is placed on power presses, it will be a blessing rather than a calamity.

Mr. Chairman, when we had the conference at the residence of the Secretary of the Treasury, which was the first time the question was taken up by me with yourself, in the presence of the committee, most of whom are here assembled, I was hopeful at that time, out of friendship for the men, that we could compromise this matter by only printing backs on the presses, but subsequently I had a request from the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the form of a letter, under date of January 16, 1911, which, with the permission of the committee, I will read.

The letter is as follows:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., January 16, 1911.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.

DEAR SIR: Will you please prepare five impressions of the \$1 silver certificate printed by hand presses and five impressions of the \$1 silver certificate printed by power presses. You will please eliminate the signatures and seals from these impressions, so as they can not under any circumstance be considered as United States currency. You will please mark these impressions "specimen." I desire to have these specimens printed for the use of the Senate Committee on Printing at the request of the chairman.

Yours truly,

A. PIATT ANDREW,
Assistant Secretary.

Before doing that I called in Mr. Foster, then chief of the executive committee, and asked him if he had any objections to it. I did this for the reason that I felt they were interested. He said, no. So we caused to be prepared a plate, and we had printed from it some impressions in the engraving division by one of the most expert printers we had in the bureau, and a staunch friend of the union. Then we took that plate down to the power-press room and we placed it on the power press, and we printed therefrom a number of impressions in the presence of Mr. Foster, Mr. McKinley, superintendent of printing; Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Randall, foreman of that room, and the printer.