Dismissed WPA Actresses in Boston Retract Charges

Three hours after Deputy Works Progress Administrator Aubrey Williams today ordered an investigation into complaints made by three former actresses employed in Boston by a Works Progress Administration theatrical unit that they had lost their jobs because they had refused "to entertain 'Federal men' at a stag party at which they were ordered to model clothes", a hearing was conducted by Acting Administrator Paul Edwards of Massachusetts. The following facts were reported to Mr. Williams:

(1) Retraction by the complainants of the alleged charges.
(2) Admission by the complainants that in staging a style show in a Boston Hotel in October 1935, several men, who, they say, were drinking, were with them in a room.
(3) That these men were NOT officials or employees of the Works Progress Administration.
(4) That the complainants did not until Friday, August 14, 1936, after their dismissal from a WPA theatrical project, make public anything about the incident which occurred ten months ago.
(5) Miss Ruth Colby, one of the complainants, mentioned in press dispatches, said that about two months ago she was released from a project because of an invitation to visit a hotel room. Testifying today she said the invitation was written on a calling card and bore the signature of a former WPA local time keeper.
(6) That the complainants resent having lost their WPA jobs.

Present at today's hearing in Boston were: Attorney Harry Lewin for the dismissed actresses; Miss Colby, one of the complainants; Leonard L. Gallagher, director of the theater project in Massachusetts; and Carl Rogers, assistant to Acting Administrator Edwards. Mr. Edwards asked that newspaper men be permitted to attend the hearing. He reported to Deputy Administrator Williams that this was objected to by the complainant's attorney.

Mr. Williams announced that an impartial board of inquiry will be appointed at Boston to decide whether there had been discrimination in the dismissal from WPA theatrical projects there of complainants. This board will be made up of a member selected by the complainants; a person chosen by Acting State Administrator Edwards and the other selected by both.