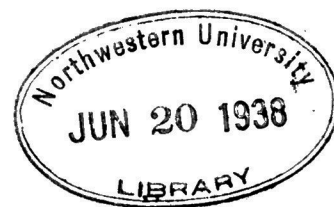


T H E W O R K S P R O G R A M

--Works Progress Administration--



For Immediate Release
Thursday, May 9, 1938

REPORT DENIES CHARGES OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY WPA IN KENTUCKY

Aubrey Williams, Deputy Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, tonight made public a report from George H. Goodman, Kentucky WPA Administrator, on an investigation of charges that WPA workers in that State have violated the rules against political activity. Mr. Goodman advised that an immediate check on seven alleged violations had been made and in no case had the charges been substantiated.

Mr. Williams instructed Mr. Goodman to continue his inquiry until the facts had been determined in every specific instance of alleged political coercion and to report further findings promptly.

Many of the charges involved individuals living "back in the mountains" or other remote areas, Mr. Goodman said, and he had been unable to check some of them by tonight but was pressing the investigation. His report on cases covered to date follows:

"1. An affidavit by Frank Starr of Campbell County charges that Starr took Lawrence Connit to Jack Maynard, assistant WPA supervisor, to get Connit qualified as a carpenter foreman and that Connit, for political reasons, did not get the job.

The facts are that Maynard offered Connit a foreman's job at \$150 a month but that Connit said he was unwilling to work for less than \$1.50 an hour. Starr was released because his work was unsatisfactory to WPA supervisors, who were also advised that his work was similarly regarded by army officials where he was employed. His letter of complaint was in the hands of a Campbell County Grand Jury, but was not considered as showing any violation of the corrupt practices act.

"2. Lee Carden, of the WPA finance division in an area office and identified as chief WPA supervisor in Edmonson county, was accused of polling the political attitude of workers in that county.

"The facts are that a statewide effort has been made to get every eligible voter registered, but special emphasis was placed on orders to WPA supervisors that they were not to question workers on their political attitude. Carden was merely urging registration, not questioning workers as to their preference among candidates.

"3. Forrest H. Lawless of Russell County was alleged to have said he was dismissed as an assistant WPA supervisor for political reasons.

"Investigation shows that Lawless, a jackhammer man on a WPA road job, and not an assistant supervisor, was discharged for shirking his job, for inefficiency and for making political speeches on the project. He was warned against this, but persisted until dismissed.

"4. Alvin Flanagan, of Russell County, was quoted as making an affidavit to the effect that he was laid off for refusing to sign a pledge of support for Senator Barkley.

"S.C. Taylor, area engineer of WPA for Russell and Pulaski counties, says he does not know Flanagan, but has found no instance in that area where any WPA worker has been asked to sign such a pledge by any WPA employe.

"5. Art Hargis and Olanthus K. Burgess, WPA workmen in Pulaski County, are reported to have said that Cleve Keeney, WPA foreman, told them they would have to support Senator Barkley.

"Keeney denies making any such statement to these or any other WPA workers.

"6. John Johnson, of Eubank, Pulaski County, charged that he was dismissed for refusal to sign a paper in support of Senator Barkley.

"The fact is that no such paper was put out by anyone in WPA.

"7. Jim Yancy and Joe Lewis of Pulaski County, identified as WPA foremen, are accused of telling workers they would be fired if they did not support Senator Barkley, in an affidavit ascribed to G.W. Maynard. The WPA area engineer, upon investigation, was unable to identify Maynard but said he had established that no such statement had been made by the foremen."

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