

John R. Gallagher

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Co-workers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am indeed very happy to have the pleasure of attending this State Convention of the National League of District Postmasters of the United States. I am grateful for the privilege for the reason that I am always able to gain much valuable information and for the many pleasant associations made at these meetings.

It is my pleasure to bring to you postmasters in Georgia greetings and best wishes from our National President, The Honorable John A. Moody, Our National Secretary, and Washington Representative, The Honorable E. A. Meeks, our Assistant Secretary, Mrs V. H. Stonesifer, and all the other National Officers.

Of the many objectives of this Organization, I am of the opinion that at this time the legislative program sponsored by this, your, League holds more interest than possibly any other subject. Therefore, I shall endeavor to briefly outline the present status of the proposals introduced for and sponsored by the League.

In the present session of this seventy-sixth Congress, Our Organization, The League, was responsible for the introduction of S.525-- H. R. 2209, commonly known as The Fourth Class Salary Bill. This Bill introduced for, and sponsored by, The National League of District Postmasters provisions of which we honestly believe contain the only fair plan of compensating Fourth Class Postmasters was on the tenth day of January introduced in the House of Representatives and then referred to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. On January the twelfth the same Bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Mead and then referred to their Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.

This measure would fix annual salaries for postmasters at Fourth Class post offices and readjust salaries at certain third class post offices, based upon the gross postal receipts in the same manner and under the same plan as that is now in effect for the postmasters of the first, second, and third classes, and would have the effect of standardizing all classes of postmasters under the same system. Your National Board consider this one of the greatest measures ever introduced in Congress for the relief

of the Fourth Class postmasters. Our Bill is very simple, which differs from other pending proposals, and any postmaster can determine what his or her salary would be under this measure if the postage sales and cancellation are too widely different.

The advantage of the League Bill is that it would fix definite salaries for a year at a time, and such salaries would be adjusted annually on a basis of the receipts for the calendar year next preceding the adjustment. The salary may be reduced or may be advanced according to the business of the office, and I am of the opinion you folks will agree with me that this is only proper.

The approval of this Bill would result in simplified accounting. Postmasters would no longer be required to count cancellation or to figure commissions at the different rates now provided. This ~~bill~~ should simplify the accounting by at least fifty per cent in such offices.

Moreover, mail diverted from another office for mailing would not effect the postmaster's salary. Boycotting of post offices would be out of the question, because a patron after learning that the postmaster was under a straight salary, would not mail his letters at other offices because of some disagreement. By the same rule, the postmaster would no longer come under a cloud of suspicion for padding.

The approval of this measure merely replaces the cancellation system by providing a salary system. It does not repeal the allowances for rent, fuel, light and equipment, which is not to be considered a part of the postmaster's salary. Neither does it repeal the commissions on money order fees or separating allowances, as these allowances are for specific purposes and should not be considered a part of the postmaster's salary.

Since our measure is simple and can be understood by any postmaster, think I can truthfully say that the only objection that has yet been advanced, is that it will increase the cost of the service. Should this measure become a law, the average salary of the fourth class postmaster would still be over one hundred dollars less than the average annual salary for clerks in third class offices, and still over eleven hundred dollars less than the average salary of third class postmasters.

In view of these averages paid other Government workers, which are provable facts, would anyone have the nerve to advocate or attempt to defend an average salary below that which would be effective under this bill for postmasters of the fourth class?

Your National and State Officers take pride in advocating the passage of such a measure solely on its merits, and now we appeal to the individual postmaster to join with us in this effort.

Now, my good friends, comes the National Association of Postmasters, after three months sponsoring the introduction of another bill, known as H. R. 5278, which is similar to their Bill presented in February of last year, except it provided amendments for increases and decreases.

The House Post Office Committee informed our Washington Representative, Mr. Meeks, that this measure was introduced by request of and sponsored by the Association. It should be understood by you postmasters, here today, that the responsibility for this measure rests entirely with the National Association of Postmasters, and that the Senators and the Representative introducing the measure did so by request and not because they approved of the proposal.

The Association measure H. R. 5278 provides that salaries shall be fixed on a basis of earnings, plus allowances during the calendar year 1938, and provides that increases or decreases will be based on each unit of \$30 stamps purchased, giving to the postmaster an increase or decrease of \$24.

This bill is only fair to the postmasters, who, in 1938, were drawing the maximum of \$1100, plus \$165 for rent, fuel, light and equipment and the average money order fees for an office of that size. In this case, the bill might be considered fair, but there are only 2500 of these postmasters. There are 27,000 who fall below this bracket and the rate of increase is based on 80% of the stamps purchased. No credit is given for box rents, which will revert to the Government, nor for postage on permit and second class matter. This means that approximately \$900,000 of annual business done by fourth class postmasters will be disregarded and no credit is given in the readjustment.