

LOCAL 88 NIXIES

VOLUME III

JUNE 1969

Report on Legislative Conference in Washington DC by F. F. Fehrenbach

Registration for myself and State President Harvey Lien was 4 PM Sunday. After dinner we attended an opening session for the Mpls. region from 7 PM to 9 PM. Total registration exceeded 3,000 postal employees from 50 states.

Monday morning session opened at 9 AM with briefing by legislative director Pat Nilan. Because of the great number of delegates closed circuit TV was used to bring the action to three additional halls in the Statler Hilton Hotel. We arrived at the main ballroom at 8 AM and by 8:15 AM it was already filled to overflowing. The following Senators and Representatives gave short addresses to the conference during the course of the morning and early afternoon: Sen. Gale McGee of Wyoming, Rep. Thaddeus J. Dulski of New York, Sen. Vance Hartke of Indiana, Rep. Daniel York and Rep. Arnold Olsen of Montana. The morning session was concluded at 1:15 PM with an impressive memorial ceremony for our late President Roy C. Hallbeck.

The afternoon was taken up with meetings on the hill with Rep. Mark Andrews at 2:30 PM., Senator Quentin Burdick at 3:30 PM and at 4:30 PM we visited with the aide of Senator Young. We meet with Mr. Sylvester, as Senator Young was accepting no appointments due to the recent death of his wife. We therefore, extended our condolences. We also asked his aide to thank the Senator for his support in past. Monday evening was taken up with an open forum with all national officers. This opened at 8 PM and lasted until 10:30 PM.

Our first meeting Tuesday morning was with Congressman Tom Kleppe at 9:30 AM. Our next meeting was with the House Post Office Committee. We attended while Postmaster General Blout testified on HR 11750. This is the bill that will bury all postal employees if it should ever become law. Tuesday afternoon we visited the House of Representatives while they were in session. Tuesday evening at 7 PM we attended a Mpls. region report. The report here was very favorable regarding Senator Burdick and Rep. Mark Andrews.

Wed. morning the closing session of the conference lasted from 10 AM to noon. We recieved reports from all 15 regions. Reports all sounded very favorable, however, we will have to wait and see how everyone actually votes when the bills are reported out of committee.

After the closing session we returned to the hill to get a couple of copies of HR 11750. This is the bill covering the Postal Corporation sponsored by the Administration. The administration is exerting great pressure on Congress to pass this bill by next August. They are selling on the theory that passage of this bill would cure all the trouble and worry they have in regard to postal problems. I strongly urge all members to write either Senator Burdick, Senator Young, Rep. Andrews or Rep. Kleppe and ask for copies of this bill.

I also believe it is imperative that all members and auxiliary members write Senator Young and Rep. Kleppe regarding all legislation, but especially HR 4803 Labor Management by Law. Another letter should follow urging opposition to HR 11750 the Post Reform Act of 1969.

I wish to report that Senator Burdick and Rep. Andrews have indicated that they will back our legislation 100 per cent.

One other comment I wish to make is don't go to Washington with your State President. It seems I never got to eat supper until 10PM every night. I think he was seeing if I might drop from starvation.

I just cannot urge too strongly the importance of every postal employee writing Senator Young and Rep. Kleppe urging them not to support HR 11750 unless vast changes are made, including either the right to strike, or equally important binding arbitration. Should this bill ever pass Congress and become law it would be the end of postal service as we know it. If anyone thinks it bad now wait until the corporation ever goes into effect. Rural communities would be lucky to get mail once or twice a week. The bill states everyone receives service equal to the revenue the area contributed. How much service would North Dakota get by that yardstick?

Now, it might be well to say a few words on what we might get in benefits out of this Congress. The 1st bill we asked about is HR 4803 Labor Management by Law. If everyone votes for this that says he will it should pass without trouble, but a Presidential veto could happen in light of the reform act. HR 10,000 will not pass in its present form, however, again there were more than enough congressmen, who said that 4.1 was not enough. I believe we stand a good chance of maybe around 6% more here. HR 9825 will not pass in its present form either. It appears most of the opposition is in the high three years. HR 767 Health Benefits Act, this should come out of committee and most legislatures indicated that they were in favor of paying up to 50%. HR 766, the Monday-Friday work week is probably in trouble.

State President Report
Harvey A. Lien

I hope you all had a good time at the State convention in Bismarck and would like for you to remember that the 1970 State Convention will be in Grand Forks on April 16, 17 and 18th.

I have appointed the following members to the Constitution Committee, Francis Fehrenbach, Chairman., Mike Carroll, Minot and Roland Fuller, Bismarck. The committee on M.A.L.'s assistance are Gene Garrison, Bismarck, Chairman, Don D. Oster, Fargo and Ed Stroller, Elgin.

Ed Sklebar, State Sec-Treas. and myself attended the S. Dak. State Convention at Huron S. Dak. and we feel that they had a real good convention. I am sure everyone enjoyed themselves as you can be sure that Ed and I did.

Emmet Andrews, Administrative Aide from the National Office was there and he gave us a lot of information on grievance procedures and had a real good question and answer period. Jay Larson, from the region, gave a short address and then had a short question and answer period but like anybody from the regional office you never get a straight answer unless you have all the facts in writing and even then file a grievance and send it through channels.

The S. Dak. State Convention was held in Aberdeen, S. Dak. on May 15 and 16 1970 at the Holliday Inn.

Your local 88 President will give you a report on the trip to the Wash. D.C. that we attended.

Chinese Checkers
by Pat Detwiller

It is going to be a very interesting year as far as this administration is concerned. I know that each one of you are watching the daily news in regards to the proposed "Postal Corporation." I don't believe that any one of us knew at this time what the effects the Corporation would have on us. I am thoroughly convinced that all the dedicated clerks understand that we do have to have a change. None of us want to see the service go downhill as fast as it has the past two years. I am sure you are ready for some sort of a change. It is interesting to see that the Congressmen are against the Corporation and also you can be sure that the Officers of the National Federation Of Postal Clerks are watching every move that is being made down there in Washington. They are very much concerned about your individual welfare and are not going to give up something that has taken many years to achieve. If we are going to keep up with the pay scale in private industry, we must get some sort of a "Strike Clause" in the new agreement. We are falling behind at a terrific pace in wages and mostly in benefits. I believe that we are still going to get some additional benefits out of this session of Congress yet this fall. There will be a lot more action on capitol hill as soon as our July 1st Pay raise is official.

It was very disappointing to see that the negotiations for a merger with the N.P.U. came to a sudden halt on May 29, 1969. I know that it would be a benefit for all Postal Clerks if we just had the one big Union. I only hope that in the very near future, talks can again be resumed.

The one big question mark in my mind about this Postal Corporation in the idea of the "Geographical Pay Scale." I am sure that none of us want to see that and it is up to all of us to write and let our Congressmen know that we oppose that part of it very much. We would hate to see the clerks in San Francisco, New York and Florida get at least \$10,000 a year because the cost of living is more there. Our winters are very severe here and we should be entitled to that much too, in short any kind of a geographical scale would be impossible to administer.

Our Clerks "Coffee Fund" party that was held in February was a success and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves a lot. It was a good feeling to see such a fine turnout and it just proves that three tours of clerks can get together and have a good time. There was a lot of talk about planning a party quite similar to that one for this fall. The expenses could not come from the coffee fund, however I would guess that we could have a similar party with the music, dinner and all for about \$7.00 a couple, if there is any interest along this line maybe something could be worked out by fall.

Officers For 1969-1970

Pres.;	F. Fehrenbach	Benefit Assoc. Rep.;	E. Sklebar
V. Pres.;	L. Scott	Tour Stewards;	L. Gill
Fin. Sec.;	E. Mayer		H. Schafer
Rec. Sec.;	L. Gill		H. Lein
Sgt. at Arms;	H. Schafer	Sick Call Reps.;	B. Warner
Hosp. Rep.;	C. Wilson		L. Chase
Trustees;	M. Johnson		C. Haugen
	D. Howard		P. Detwiller
	L. Nelson		E. Entzminger

Editor - P. Detwiller

From The President's Desk
F. F. Fehrenbach

First of all I would like to point out that anyone scheduled for an examination can get one free chance to case the exam during the last 15 days prior to his due date. The following is an excerpt from postal bulletin of Dec. 12, 1968. "An employee may be permitted to take a scheduled examination not more than 15 days in advance of his scheduled date. On the first such attempt in advance on a particular examination do not record as a failure any score between 80 and 94. On subsequent attempts any score below 95 must be recorded as a failure. The Postal manual will be amended accordingly."

As you can see by this if you fail to get a mark of at least 80 you would still be charged with a failure. If anyone has any questions regarding this do not hesitate to come and ask about it.

For some time now, there has been a notice posted on the Bulletin boards by the time clocks, along with an article from the postal bulletin regarding the importance of employees getting their personal folders up to date. I want to take this opportunity to urge everyone to check their folders and document any outside employment, club or union activities which might or could have a bearing on future advancements. Even if they do not help the information surely will do no harm. Everyone has everything to gain and nothing to lose by getting your records up to date and complete in education and experience.

At the recent State Convention at Bismarck a committee was appointed to study whether or not the United Federation of Postal Clerks should conduct annual or Bi-annual conventions. The committee members appointed were Roland Fuller, Mike Carroll and Francis Fehrenbach. I was appointed chairman of this committee and therefore solicit your assistance in forming an opinion prior to the next convention at Grand Forks. Any and all members of Local 88 are urged to submit their wishes to me in writing along with reasons why they feel we should meet annually or bi-annually as the case may be. They must be in writing so all members of the committee can study them prior to the next convention. It would also be advantageous to have two copies. I also intend writing to all the other locals in the state to get their views. Inasmuch as we have joint conventions with the NALC the carriers will also be contacted for their views. I know it seems like a long time to the next convention but submit your ideas now because time has a way of passing so quickly.

Over the years I have many time heard someone say something like: What did the union do that for? Or it just might be some dissatisfaction in regard to a job posting or a scheme assignment. Of course the union isn't just a few officers, it should be all the members giving your officers your ideas and support. Your elected officials cannot carry out your wishes unless you the members let the officials know what your wishes really are. The only way to get anything done in the manner in which you want them is to make your wishes known. This, of course, doesn't necessarily mean that every wish of every member can be met. The officers must follow the dictates of the majority and when a member disagrees with the decision, the only way to get a change is to get busy and convince a majority that it should be handled differently.

This is also in the same area. What can the union do for me? I might ask Have you done anything for the union? I can answer the first question, can you answer the second?

I don't believe there is a postal employee in this office that will not accept a pay raise or some other benefit that Congress might enact into law. How many of us has written to a Senator or Representative informing him of just what you would like him to vote for in your behalf? How then does he get the message that we are in need of higher wages or other benefits? Not one of us can expect to get annual leave unless we ask someone for it. The same is true in legislation. Those employees who do no letter writing are indeed lucky to have an organization to do the asking for them. This same organization is also writing the bills introduced in our behalf. This union is also getting these bills sponsored by legislators. It should be our task to get the necessary support to get them enacted into law. It should also be our task to see to it that our friends in Congress are reelected when the time comes.

I can assure anyone that our union and its National Officers are doing their part. The big question is--are we doing our part?

Memo From Your Hospital Plan Rep.
by Cy Wilson

For the information of those of you, who are interested, during the quarter ending March 31, 1969; a total of 84 members were enrolled in our federation hospital plan. Of these 26 members were enrolled in the high option plan, the balance of 58 members were enrolled in the low option plan.

This would seem to indicate member resistance to the continuing increase in health insurance especially the high option plan which gives nearly complete coverage, especially beneficial in long or costly hospitalization and surgery.

There are several bills introduced in Congress to help pay more of the cost of our health premiums. I'm sure all of us are interested in getting some of these bills through this session of Congress. For those of you who are willing to help yourselves in this matter and I trust you all are; "Why not spend a few minutes of your time and a six cent stamp and let your Congressman know your feelings in this regard." I can hear some of you say, "Whats the use, it won't do any good anyway." But one thing I am sure of, it won't do any harm and the cost to send a letter just a few minutes time and of course six cents of your money and I'll gladly donate a stamp to any of you who are willing to write--just ask me.

We will be using a new dual purpose form (White) when the present supply of Doctor forms are used up. These new forms have one side for the doctor's remarks and all patient treatment. The other side of the form is for the hospital, in the case of bed patients.

I might add that any of you who are having trouble getting your claims processed would do well to check the clinics and doctors involved before writing the hospital plan or seeing me. Some of these clinics especially are notoriously slow in filing claims. Once our office gets the claim, they are processed in a week or ten days. Again let me say if you have any problems regarding a claim, I'll be happy to assist in any way I can.

There will be a general open season for changing plans or options this coming November.

Notes From The Auxiliary
Mrs. Charles Simonson

The Auxiliary would like to thank the staff of "Local 88 Nixes" for the opportunity to tell everyone a little bit our our organization.

Our main objective is letter writing to our Congressman and Senators about legislation that concerns our husbands. We have followed this job to completion by writing the actual letters at our meetings and certainly hope that our husbands would see that they were mailed. We have money raising projects such as selling candy and rummage sales. We are hoping to have many new members joining us in September. We will be calling every lady that is eligible to join in the fall. We hope to see you all then.

Tour Three News
by Harvey A. Lien

About the 20th of June we should know what the survey team has decided on and their proposed changes. Rumors are that about 10 new regular jobs will be made but as to what days off they have will be anybody's guess. We have gotten a few new subs on our tour and I understand we are going to get a few more.

I suppose everyone is just waiting for the time to move in the new Post Office. I have seen the layout for the floor plan, But I think there will have to be a few changes when we get into the new office.

We did have a little trouble with getting short notice annual for the clerks that come to work at 6:00 to 2:30 shift. Some of the tour 3 foremen did not want to give annual unless the tour 1 foreman agreed to it and none of the clerks wanted to call the tour 1 foreman at 9 or 10 o'clock at night to get off. It has been agreed on that if the work load is light enough to give annual, the tour 3 foreman is to let him go.

With the summer vacations coming up, I hope you all have a good time and good health in whatever you plan to do on your vacation.

Moving Day Will Soon Be Here
by Pat Detwiller

The new Post Office is taking shape right on schedule. The open brick area in front will soon be filled up and the scaffolding will soon be done. The third floor is almost all painted. The first floor is all plastered and will soon be painted. The entire box section is all framed in and it is just a matter of putting the ready-built boxes in place. I understand that the box section is all around the elevator. The carriers will occupy the entire east wall in one long row. As of this date we will be in the new Post Office on October 22, 1969. The most recent change was the additional changes that had to be made in regards to the docking area in the rear. It is official now that 3rd Ave. will be closed off and the Post Office will get most of that area so that will make a much bigger docking area in the rear. New plans, bids, etc., have to be let for that additional change. There is no news on the parking situation. The entire operation will be in the hands of GSA and there is no word from them at this time.