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Farewell Talk by the Public Printer

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF

HON. CARL HAYDEN

OF ARIZONA

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

*Thursday, March 18 (legislative day of
Monday, March 15), 1948*

Mr. HAYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Appendix of the RECORD a farewell talk by Public Printer Giegengack to the employees of the Government Printing Office, delivered on March 12, 1948.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I have asked you to meet with me for a few minutes at this time, for two reasons. The first is that I could not leave the Government Printing Office without thanking every one of you for your loyalty, your cooperation, and your help in transforming the old, antiquated establishment which I found in 1934 into the modern, well-equipped service organization we have today; second, to review with you some of the things that we have done, and to leave with you a few suggestions that might be helpful to you in solving the problems that you are to meet in the future in your efforts to render Congress and the departments and agencies a service that they can get from no other source. Therein lies your sole hope of job security.

In talking to the executives Tuesday, I emphasized this thought by saying that first and foremost we must always remember that it is our duty to see that Congress and the departments and agencies receive the services they need at the lowest possible cost. That is the firm foundation on which we must build. I added that if we are to remain on this sound foundation we must not relax our efforts to keep our plant and equipment modern and adequate. We must see that no unnecessary operations are performed and that the force is held to the minimum necessary to accomplish the work, that established standards of production are met, and that costs are kept within bounds.

I have devoted 13 years and 8 months of my life to the Government Printing Office—

in working with you—and I do want to feel that you are my friends. And as a friend, I want to warn you of the dangers I see from the position I hold that are possibly not apparent to others. Unless all of us keep in mind the basic principle I have just mentioned, there can be no efficient service to the Government and no job security for you.

I know I have given you many pointers on these things before, but I couldn't help feeling then, and do now, that you took them with a grain of salt and with a feeling that I had some personal ax to grind. Now you must realize, every one of you, that what you do or do not do after Monday cannot affect me personally in any manner. As my friends, I therefore hope you will throw your grains of salt away and that for your own sake and for your job security, and last but not least, for your Government, you will keep in mind the things I have said and will say before I say au revoir.

All of us know that we can't do our best unless our working conditions are good, unless we can feel that we are reasonably well compensated for what we do, and unless the relationship existing between us and our supervisors are pleasant. Let us see what we have accomplished together on these three points.

WORKING CONDITIONS

First, let us fix in our minds a picture of some of the old, dilapidated, crowded, poorly arranged buildings, many of which had been condemned as fire hazards, that we were forced to use in those days. I think it was 11 separate and badly connected buildings we had on the site where our present new main building stands. Can you recall the inefficiency that resulted from the long hauls you had to make in order to get a job together in those days? Now let us compare that picture with the picture we have today of our fine new buildings and the efficient arrangement of our work that they permit. True, we are still a little crowded in spots, but we have an additional building program that we hope will relieve those conditions. Notwithstanding a little overcrowding here and there, those of us who have seen other printing plants know that we have working conditions that are unexcelled in the industry—unexcelled not only from the standpoint of efficiency but also from the standpoints of sanitation,

health, comfort, and safety. I brought out in our meeting with the executives that as a result of our intensive training program in safety techniques—I think we called it our safety-training program for supervisors—our accident rate has been greatly reduced and many of our employees here are healthier, happier, in a better financial condition and—yes—maybe even alive, as a result of our training in safety. Let all of us keep this important thing in mind, not only for our own personal protection but also for the protection of our families.

WAGE RATES

I mentioned compensation as the second of the three points we must keep in mind if we are to do a good job. A review of our wage rates shows that as a result of the increases we have been able to grant during the 13 years and 8 months I have been with you, every employee in the Office, with the exception of a few in the executive group, is as well or better paid for each hour he actually works than a worker performing similar duties and having similar responsibilities anywhere else in the United States, either in industry or in the other Federal departments and agencies. Please keep in mind that in 1934 the wage rate for a laborer was 66 cents an hour and for a hand compositor \$1.26 an hour. These rates have been increased from 66 cents to \$1.07 and from \$1.26 to \$2.12. Regardless of what may have been the rumor in the past to the contrary, this is a goal toward which I have worked, and one that I was particularly glad to reach.

EMPLOYEE AND SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIP

The third point I have mentioned is the friendly relationship necessary between the employee and his supervisor. We have tried to pick and to train supervisors who are efficient and fair, and I believe we have. I have asked them to treat the employees for whom they are responsible as they, the supervisors, would like to be treated. Of course, in an organization as large as ours, there will unquestionably be occasional friction, occasional misunderstanding and hard feeling, but on the whole, we must have gotten along all right, because our team has done a grand job.

OPERATING COSTS

We have good working conditions, our compensation is good, and our supervisors aren't too bad. What are some of the other things we must keep in mind if we are to make certain that the Government gets its printing at the lowest possible cost—the foundation on which our job security rests? Well, as you may say, I have mentioned several of them to you before. Remember a meeting we had here in Harding Hall about a year ago? I then told you how our abuse of sick leave was adding to costs and warned that if we weren't more conservative in its use, that it might be curtailed or taken away from us. Have you seen in the papers in the last few days the results of the studies that have been made

on this subject with the prediction that that is what is going to happen?

I think we mentioned at the same time that our records did not indicate that we were getting the production that we ought to have from the highly skilled employees we have and the good equipment that has been provided for their use; we referred to our order permitting smoking and suggested that there were reports of apparent abuse. Below-standard production and time lost in the abuse of sick leave or other privileges are, of course, additions to our costs that make our foundation less secure.

In talking to the supervisors along this line, I tried to emphasize that every unnecessary operation must be eliminated. Again may I quote what I said to you on this point a year ago:

"In addition to devoting our full time to our duties and to production, we must give intelligent thought to what we are doing. We should always be on the lookout for easier, simpler, more efficient ways of doing our jobs. We should question every operation we perform to determine whether or not it is essential. If we think it is not essential, we should immediately recommend to our superiors that the operation be eliminated or, if not completely eliminated, that it be modified or changed to accomplish the same results in less time, with less effort, and less expense."

Now that we have the authority to pay for suggestions that save money, won't you redouble your efforts to help the Office find less expensive ways to get our job done?

PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS

In talking about job security, I am keenly conscious of the fact that in the last few weeks I have been compelled to approve slight reductions in force in three of our major divisions. It is the most unpleasant duty that I have had to perform, but I would be violating the law if I did not; and I would, in addition, be jeopardizing the positions of many more by increasing our costs by the salaries of employees we did not need. I have made as certain as it is humanly possible that these reductions were as fair as they could be under the law. Notwithstanding these facts there have been rumors that I have been unfair, that the lay-offs were unnecessary and for some sinister and personal reason.

I believe a check will show that the Government Printing Office has dropped under reduction-in-force procedure fewer employees than any other of the major old-line agencies. The reductions that we have made have been due solely to the drop in the incoming volume of work. We all know that salaries have increased. We all know that salary increases necessarily increase the cost of printing. All of us who read the newspapers know that there have been drastic cuts in the appropriations made to the departments who order work from us. It naturally follows that with the departments having less money to spend for printing and binding and our charges for what we do for

them being higher, they are able to order less printing and binding. This means less work in the Government Printing Office and, necessarily, fewer employees.

COMMERCIAL PROCUREMENT

But it has been said by some seeking personal gain or by those making an effort, either intentionally or unintentionally, to cause a lack of confidence in the Government Printing Office, in order to further their own ends, that the reduced volume of printing ordered from the Government Printing Office is not the cause of the reduction in force; that there is plenty of printing being ordered and that there would be jobs for everyone on the roll if we did not procure any work from commercial printers. I assure you that such is not the case.

There are two major classes of work that we buy regularly from commercial printers, regardless of the volume of work in the plant.

The first is a type of work we are not equipped to do economically. It is work which can, in the better interests of the Government, be bought from specialty houses. In this class fall fan-fold forms, snap-outs, color work, tabulating cards, and so forth.

The second class is a type of work which we cannot produce in the plant without disrupting already established schedules if we are to comply with the time allowed by the ordering agency for its production.

It has been our policy to do everything we can to build up confidence in the Government Printing Office. The surest way we can destroy that confidence is to fail to keep the promises that we have made to the ordering agencies as to time of job completion. The departments need certain printing jobs to carry out their important functions. If we fail to keep our promises, they will unquestionably seek legislation to give them authority to procure their own printing from commercial sources, and we will not be in a position to oppose such moves successfully.

It was for this reason that the chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing directed us to release for commercial procurement any job that could not be produced in the plant in the time allowed by the ordering agency for its production.

MINIMUM LAY-OFFS

I am sure that from this you will clearly see that the two reasons for the reduction in force are increased costs and reduced appropriations. I was glad, and I think many of us should be thankful, that larger reductions have not been necessary. If we keep our costs down and do nothing to cause lack of confidence in our ability to render service, I trust that no further reductions will be necessary. As a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that many of those who have been placed on a year's furlough will be returned to the rolls in the not too distant future. Only yesterday I authorized the recall of two separation letters; and due to

resignations, separations, and retirements, which we believe will rapidly increase as soon as the new retirement act becomes effective, it is entirely possible that the great majority of those who have been furloughed will be returned to duty. I sincerely hope so.

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

As I told you when I began this little talk, I had asked you to meet with me for a few minutes for two reasons. The first was to thank you for the help you have given me in the past and the second was to give you a few tips that might help you in the future. I wonder if all of us or even if many of us realize the importance and the magnitude of the job that we have done together. I tried to present it in the little book entitled "Public Printing in Peace and War" that we got out recently. It covers well the part we played in the war effort. I am sure that all of you who have had or will have the opportunity to read it will feel a keen sense of justifiable pride in our wonderful accomplishments during the most difficult years of our national history. That we are not alone in thinking that we have done a good job or that we did a good job together during the last 13 years and 8 months is indicated by the fact that the President awarded us a Certificate of Merit. I am going to read it to you:

"The President of the United States of America awards this Certificate of Merit to Augustus Edward Giegengack for outstanding fidelity and meritorious conduct in aid of the war effort against the common enemies of the United States and its Allies in World War II."

In accepting this Certificate of Merit, I said:

"Although this certificate carries my name as the recipient of the award, I feel that I merely hold it in custody for the 7,000 employees of the Government Printing Office, and I am proud to accept it in their behalf. Their efforts made the award possible. It was they who made up the task force which accomplished the objective. Their share in the honor is greater than mine and my chief satisfaction today is that I have received this recognition as their representative."

I want to thank you sincerely for your support, for your loyalty, and for your untiring efforts in making our team the success that it has been and is. I want to thank you with all the sincerity at my command, and I say it with the conviction that you know it comes from the very depths of my heart.

There are many, many important things we should keep in mind if our team is to improve or even hold our present position. I have mentioned only a few of them—some of the thoughts that I have considered to be the most important. There are other suggestions made in the volume I just mentioned, and in our annual report for 1947. If we will devote our efforts to the tasks that lie ahead as closely, as loyally, and as untiringly as we have in the past I have no fears for the future of the Government Printing Office, and feel that I

can leave it in your hands, confident of the fact that it will do even a better job in the future than it has in the past.

LETTER TO PRESIDENT, AND REPLY

With this conviction, I addressed, under date of March 9, the following letter to the President of the United States:

"MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: It is with sincere regret that I have reached the decision to ask you to accept my resignation as Public Printer of the United States, effective March 15, 1948. I take this action because my duty to my family demands that I increase my income substantially above the salary fixed by Congress for the position under a law passed 20 years ago.

"It has been a privilege to serve our Government during the last 13½ years under Mr. Roosevelt and yourself, and I shall always recall with pleasure many happy associations and experiences. These were climaxed by your award to me of the Certificate of Merit for outstanding fidelity and meritorious conduct in aid of the war effort. This recognition and the many compliments the Government Printing Office has received from congressional leaders, heads of Federal agencies, and leaders in the printing industry cause me to feel that the financial sacrifices that have been involved and the occasional discouraging handicaps encountered in trying to do an efficient job have not been without their compensations.

"The Government Printing Office is a great organization and is doing a real job for the taxpayer. I leave it with reluctance and with sincere thanks to you for the opportunity you

have given me to be of service and for your cooperation and support. You have my best wishes for a continuance of your personal happiness and success. If at any time I may be of service to you in any way, please call upon me.

"Most respectfully yours,

"A. E. GIEGENGACK."

His reply is as follows:

"DEAR GUS: In view of the reasons outlined in your letter of March 9, I reluctantly accept, as tendered, your resignation as Public Printer, effective March 15, 1948.

"You have held the position longer than any other Public Printer. I know that in the future you will be able to view with a great deal of personal satisfaction your career in the public service.

"From my own experience in the Senate as a member of the Committee on Printing and as chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, I am well aware of the confidence the committees had in you as a loyal and efficient public servant who had the respect and support of the committees and of the entire printing industry.

"It is with deep regret that I see you leave the Government service. You take with you my very best wishes for the future.

"Very sincerely yours,

"HARRY S. TRUMAN."

This, therefore, is my last official meeting with you. We have worked hard together to do a job. I think we have done a job that we can all be proud of.