

The CHAIRMAN. The next witness is Owen E. Pence, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Senator KING. Is that different from the Young Men's Christian Association?

Mr. PENCE. No, sir. It is the official body of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States in all the different local communities. It is a constituted body set up by their representatives and under a constitutional procedure.

STATEMENT OF OWEN E. PENCE, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS, 347 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

I speak as a representative of a special committee on security recently authorized by the general board of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States, which is the ad interim body of the National Council of local Y. M. C. A.'s.

The National Council of Y. M. C. A.'s is the national agency of 1,160 local Y. M. C. A.'s in this country, and the related State organizations thereof. It does not speak with final authority for these on matters of national policy or on legislation, but, by reason of its constitutional and directly representative character, it does from time to time give expression to various cooperative aims and enterprises which the local units may authorize.

In 1931 this National Council took action supporting, among other social ideals of the Federal Council of Churches, the following:

Insurance, socially administered at cost, against invalidism, disabilities from illness and occupational injuries, want in old age, and enforced unemployment—
and added—

That in advocating these social ideals for adoption generally, the associations themselves should seek to apply these principles in their own practices and relations as employers.

In 1934, in reaffirming this general position, the National Council expressly gave instructions—

To keep abreast of all developing social legislation proposals having to do with employee security and to call the attention of the council and the associations to any point on which action is deemed desirable.

During the past month—

The general board of Y. M. C. A.'s of the United States, keenly aware of the national character of the social-security problem of our people, requested the committee on security * * * to keep abreast of progress toward Federal legislation and to support legislation affecting employees of the National Council in line with the highest standards of Christian responsibility.

Thus, while not overlooking the concern of over a million and a half of our members and other constituency, largely youths under 25 years of age, who are deeply involved in plans and public policies for making jobs and self-maintenance possible, and for avoiding hazards to self-respect and security with which this bill deals, we speak particularly as representing agencies which employ approximately 16,000 persons, the larger part of whom fall within the general definitions of the proposed act.

Senator KING. Do you propose stating how those 16,000 are employed?

Mr. PENCE. I may say that 3,500 of them are professional workers—we call them secretaries—and about 12,000 are nonprofessional workers. They maintain the buildings, the office services, restaurant, and such services.

Senator KING. Those 3,500 that you just mentioned—what do they do?

Mr. PENCE. They are those who guide the general administration, program and policy aspects, and lead in the activities there, and with many lay workers, of course.

Senator KING. The personnel within that group changes very frequently, doesn't it?

Mr. PENCE. The average tenure of those whom we call professional workers, and of course it is never complete until each stops, runs into about 12 years, but we think of it as a career for large numbers.

Senator KING. They are recruited from various walks of life, and, after their 12 years of service, they return to the various business pursuits?

Mr. PENCE. A certain proportion do, but increasingly the tenure is lengthening, as our standards for entrance have been raised. These are now higher.

Senator KING. Is theological training necessary?

Mr. PENCE. No, sir; few have had it. A general college education is now the minimum for entrance.

Senator KING. Is there any—I do not use the word "orthodoxy" in an improper sense—are there any fundamental principles of religion to which they must give adherence in order to come within that group, or do you take people with any religious views, or people whose ideals or ideas regarding the Christian religion and the vicarious work of Jesus Christ are quite at variance with the orthodox view?

Mr. PENCE. There is considerable latitude, but the traditional relationship of the Young Men's Christian Association is in close association with the Protestant-church view, although its membership in the last full census of communicant relationship included at least 20 percent from other than Protestant groupings. Its secretaryships and, in general, its boards have been more largely drawn—almost exclusively drawn—from the Protestant group, but even there the national body gave formal recognition to local associations who might have as many as 10 percent at least of local boards from other groups, and, more recently still, each association is self-determining in regard to these matters. That was by formal action in 1933.

Senator KING. The reason that I make this inquiry is that I have been in some countries where I came in contact with organizations labeled Young Men's Christian Association, and some of the persons at least from my point of view expressed sentiments not at all in harmony with the Christian faith. They were agnostics and some of them were extreme in that, and yet they found refuge and were in service in this association.

Mr. PENCE. I must point out that people of any country have their freedom to develop a Young Men's Christian Association movement, and each movement is autonomous, joined in a fairly loose world alliance, without formal controls except in certain respects as to recognition. Therefore, the American associations do not determine these matters for associations of another country, although they may use the name under the world alliance.

The CHAIRMAN. You may proceed.

Mr. PENCE. I was speaking of the 16,000 persons who are all in our present employed personnel, that the larger part of them fall within the general provision of the proposed act. We desire that the degree of support indicated by the foregoing official actions be entered upon your record and, by this means, to give general approval to the board purposes of the measure.

As a private agency, non-profit-making in character, and dependent to a considerable degree upon community good will and support, we do not overlook that the proposed measure adds materially to the budget costs of employing organizations. The pay roll of our associations aggregates nearly 15 millions of dollars annually.

Senator KING. In the United States?

Mr. PENCE. In the United States alone. That is just over 40 percent of the current operating budget. Such a charge naturally affects the capacity of an agency so supported to extend or even to maintain the heavy volume of low-charge or free services which practically all local associations have been carrying during the past 5 years. Nevertheless, we believe the present hazards to security of employed personnel totalling 16,000 persons demand attention, and that such charges should be paid gladly.

May I comment that we would like to make that point clear, because we understand that some agencies who are somewhat similarly dependent upon community good will and support would like to have a complete exemption from the operation of the act in their behalf in every particular.

The CHAIRMAN. You do not wish that?

Mr. PENCE. We do not wish that, and on the contrary, we support the act.

The Y. M. C. A. has maintained for many years a private retirement plan, under the insurance laws of New York State. Thus far it has provided benefits for our professional workers only. It has paid no benefits to over 12,000 nonprofessional employees. Representatives of this retirement fund have, after due consultation, associated themselves with the suggestion just made (to be made) on behalf of the church pension boards. Partial though the coverage of our present fund is, we very much desire to maintain such plan in efficient operation; provided, it may be possible to work out feasible administrative procedures, and to set controls by which Federally adopted standards of social protection shall be unqualifiedly maintained.

We strongly urge that, if such an arrangement is permissible, it shall in no wise affect unfavorably the right of other workers not so covered to claim benefits under the Federal-State plan. Such special provision, we would urge, should be so devised as to permit optional, not compulsory, participation by any or all of our employees eligible for recognition under the Wagner bill, S. 1130.

If I may present for the record but not occupy your time with a further statement from the Official Yearbook of our organization, dealing with some of these problems, I should like to conclude by a personal word to say this. I have spent most of my professional life on behalf of American youth, and especially in the study of their problems of occupational adjustment. There is no problem before our people today so full of significance for the future of this country

as the sense of bafflement and defeat with which youth faces its uncertain vocational future.

If there were no other reason at all for doing so, I would myself enthusiastically support this measure because of its provisions for the Federal compulsory contributory pension system, because of the opportunity it may give for young workers to build up some basis for their own security in old age.

I would also like to stress that the efficiency of any system of social protection depends upon the definition and maintenance of suitable standards, and operation by competent personnel. There may be a genuine danger in allowing to States too large measure of latitude in devising widely differing systems of unemployment insurance. It is my personal view that these considerations are of such importance as to warrant the use of direct Federal subsidy to the extent necessary to establish and maintain a system of unemployment insurance which will afford a substantially equal degree of protection to all, regardless of where they are employed.

Senator KING. When you speak of Federal subsidy, you do not mean to exclude the duty of the State?

Mr. PENCE. On no account, but merely to safeguard the problem of standards which have been debased, at the point where the question of competence of personnel and adequacy of coverage and, in general, relatively equal coverage shall be available for all citizens coming under the purview of the act.

Senator KING. Your plan does not contemplate that the persons who might be entitled to benefits under the so-called "Wagner bill" shall, in addition to those benefits, receive benefits from your organization?

Mr. PENCE. No, sir.

Senator KING. Or if they do, they ought to be subtracted from the other so that in the aggregate they will be placed on a parity with others who are getting the benefits?

Mr. PENCE. That is right. And we are particularly concerned that the very fact that for some years we have had our private plan covering the professional group only, shall not prevent our nonprofessional group having full access to the general benefits intended under the act.

In addition, if I may, I should like to add a further word in personal capacity. In the official year book of our organization for 1934, under the heading of "Character and Cooperation in Social Reconstruction" reference is made to—

* * * certain areas of our common social life which seem to cry to heaven for a genuine experience of cooperative faith.

The insecurity of our people is perhaps the most obvious and tragic of these. We are living in a time—

When the frontier of our forefathers lies at hand no longer to reward the self-respecting effort of the individual wherever he may go;

When the returns of honorable labor, and the costs of decent living, are so unstable and disparate as to produce grave anxiety and strain;

When even the very access to livelihood, and the right to earn subsistence, are denied to millions;

When 1 person in 5 in certain States (and in certain cities 1 in 4) is on public-relief rolls;

When 5,000,000 families are expected, according to announcement by high Government authority, to require public "relief of destitution" by next Febru-

ary—a situation in which relief as a private charity has given way to rescue as a governmental duty;

When perhaps 10,000,000 are still unemployed;

When a whole generation of youth—those with whom the Y. M. C. A. has chiefly concerned itself—never yet employed and almost unwanted, economically speaking, stand helpless before forces they cannot understand, and often hopeless amidst attitudes and conflict they cannot support;

When vast projects of experimentation are organized, as expressions of social concern, in the C. C. C. camps, in the Tennessee Valley, in subsistence homesteads, in emergence colleges; and gigantic public works in city slums, in water-power developments, in parks, and on the land; projects without precedent, reflecting needs too great to understand, imposing obligations upon all citizens, leading to bewilderment for many, to honest differences as to policy among not a few, and to open ridicule and scorn by some;

When the economy in which we live, whether one of scarcity or surplus, requires a principle of reference, something human and ultimate, by which to appraise economic forces and the control of their behavior;

When social security has become a major public issue, including insurance against the hazards of unemployment, sickness, and old age; whilst the restoration, long hoped for, of employment and opportunity to work, production, purchasing power, is yet delayed;

When issues involving the health, happiness, security, and the very life of millions are still measured, and attitudes toward them determined very largely by considerations of political advantage or financial self-interest.

These facts and others challenge confidence in Christian character at its very heart and test the first claims of any cooperative philosophy.

It is estimated on the basis of reports from 333 Associations a year ago that 1 member in 6 over 18 years of age was then unemployed. It is known that Y. M. C. A. members as a group are younger and lower-salaried workers, and that the savings and all other equities of many have been sacrificed. The Association's own life is involved in its members' security and welfare, along with that of the whole community.

Therefore every aspect of recent national economic policy concerns the Y. M. C. A.'s mission, methods, and message.

It is concerned with the aims, the hopes, the practices, and the tendencies of N. R. A. and other emergency administrations; and with all of the debates upon these, to see if the cooperative capacities of the agricultural and trade groups within themselves (worker and employer alike), or between them all with the whole people through government, can keep their unity long enough to break the force of the depression, and their goodwill firmly enough to withstand the efforts of those who would defeat their purpose.

It is concerned with the functioning of the courts, with their unfettered freedom and courage, whose decisions by authority of the people through the law are sustaining or marring the service of justice in the land.

It is concerned with the dignity and right of labor under all conditions, and with justice to labor under modern industrialism, holding the return of employment, the growth of real wages, and the cooperative achievement of industrial peace as urgent, just, and Christian.

It is concerned with the restoration of confidence upon honorable terms, with the reestablishment of production consonant with public welfare, with the continuance of experimentation toward a more abundant and Christian society for all, holding dear the values hitherto secured when they do not obstruct greater values.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee thanks you very much.

The committee will recess until tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

(Whereupon, at 11:15 a. m., the hearing recessed as noted.)