

EC

Monthly Report of Dr. F. C. Snow

Eureka, California

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Mr. Irvin R. Kuenzli, Secty-Treasurer
American Federation of Teachers
28 E Jackson Boulevard
Chicago 4, Illinois

Dear Secretary Kuenzli:

Your letter asking me for a summary of my organizing activities for the month of September reached me about the time I received a copy of Mr. Roth's report to the Executive Council on the Organizing Campaign in Utah. Mr. Roth covered the Utah situation well and since I make a complete carbon copy of my A. F. of L. Weekly Report for the National A.F.E. Office, I more or less took it for granted that a summary of the months of September and October combined would be satisfactory. It is my understanding that you want the summary report for the Executive Council.

I had worked a few days the first week in September contacting teachers in Fontana, Bellflower, California and members of the San Francisco State College faculty before being called back to Salt Lake City on Labor Day. However, these California contacts were made before the school terms opened and it was all but impossible to get meetings arranged. I was simply laying groundwork for a good beginning when schools were in session again. I traveled the 800 miles from Oakland, California to Salt Lake City by automobile on the 7th, 8th and 9th of September. I left Oakland about 1: P.M. on the 7th and arrived in Salt Lake City before Noon on September 9th. I was relieved from my California assignment, temporarily, by an agreement reached between Herrick Roth, Cecile Oliver, Ben Rust and Mr. Kuenzli. It was agreed that I should work in California and Oregon after the Utah assignment was completed.

The "Big meeting" of Civic and Church leaders, P.T.A., U.E.A. and N.E.A. representatives, superintendents of city schools and the state superintendent as well as school principals, was held in Salt Lake City in late August from the four corners of Utah. President Early of the N.E.A. journeyed by air to Utah to attend the meeting. The meeting was called for the specific purpose of telling the 6000 teachers of Utah that there were no increases in pay for them this year and to sign their contracts and go to work as usual. Understand some of the U.E.A. leaders had the teachers all worked up over the idea of withholding contracts until an increase in pay for teachers was forthcoming. A strike if you please!

I spent Saturday and Sunday, October 12th and 13th as a consultant at the Colorado Federation of Teachers Organizational Workshop in Colorado Springs at the invitation of Herrick S. Roth, Executive Secretary of the C.F.T. I met and worked with a most enthusiastic group which included the Executive Council members and many teachers from the various locals in the state. Plans were blue printed for a continuous organizing program in Colorado this year.

October 27, 1953

The labor leaders, Herrick Roth and I discouraged the A.F.T. groups in such actions. We knew they were not disciplined for any such action and would take a beating. Superintendent Moffit of Provo pointed out to a labor committee, of which Herrick Roth and I were a part, that he would use every housewife in town to keep the schools open if a strike were called. I proudly pointed out to Superintendent Moffit that it was his U.E.A. people and not the A.F.T. who had talked so much about striking. Superintendent Moffit is a leader of long standing and much influence in the U.E.A. and N.E.A. in Utah.

The Utah legislature adjourned last Spring without providing any extra money for the starving teachers of Utah and left the Utah teachers \$13,600,000 short in their state retirement fund. The state income tax which is earmarked for schools was actually reduced by the last legislature, throwing more of the burden of school support on local property taxes. In addition the teachers are threatened with a law setting up a "merit rating" system for the determination of promotions and salary levels. Governor J. Bracken Lee has finally consented to call a special session before January 1st. But my guess is he will find an excuse to change his mind.

Things look quite favorable when I arrived back in Utah on September 9th. We hoped to add three or four additional locals to the three previously chartered. We set up meetings in several communities including Davis County, Farmington, Orem, Ogden, Alpine, Provo, Leader, Price, Salt Lake City, Granite and Nebo. We chartered the Alpine Federation of Teachers, Local #1201.

We set up an organizing Committee from the four locals (Alpine, Provo, Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County) to assist in an attempt to reach other communities in the state.

Mr. Roth worked with us in Utah for four days and during that time he gave us invaluable assistance in setting up a non-chartered state federation of teachers with a program built on the state level. It is, after all, from the state that most of the relief for salaries and working conditions for teachers in Utah must come. Mr. Roth also assisted us in setting up a state conference for the A.F.T. groups to be held at the Electricians Hall in Salt Lake City on September 9th. Mr. Roth was to have been in attendance at this conference.

Mr. Roth also assisted the locals in the preparation of a press release which was sent to all newspapers and radio stations in Utah. The radio stations gave us a fair play but our newspaper coverage was very poor and the editorials from the Deseret News were damaging.

Both of the Salt Lake City papers, the Deseret News and the Salt Lake Tribune are property of the Mormon Church. The attitude of the Deseret News and the L.D.S. Churches toward the unionization of teachers is well indicated in President Bob Kolt's letter to me on October 4th, a copy of which I am attaching to this report.

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October 27, 1953

With the assistance of the labor leaders and the organizing committee of the four A.F.T. locals I ran down every good clue and exhausted every means to organize additional locals in Utah. Roy Rees, President and Dave Turner, Secretary, of the Utah State Federation of Labor, gave freely of their time in assisting us. We also received excellent support from the Central Labor bodies at Ogden, Salt Lake City and Provo.

Teaching positions suffered a one-third turnover in Utah this year. Only thirty-four percent of the nearly nine hundred teachers graduating from Utah teachers training institutions last Spring took teaching jobs in face of the great shortage of teachers in their home state. One out of every four teachers in Utah today have only "emergency" credentials. It was one to six last year. Many of Utah's best teachers secured teaching positions in other states where the salaries are higher. More went to California than any other state. Still others quit teaching and took up other lines of employment. Too many teachers with the ability to furnish the leadership so necessary in building a tradeunion have left teaching behind them in Utah, to make an outstanding success with our movement. It should be pointed out also that Utah boasted of having 100% of their teachers in the U.E.A. and 96% in N.E.A. Many districts had such membership requirements stipulated in their contracts.

In spite of all these things we have made progress with our organizing program in Utah. We must continue to give such courageous leaders as Wilmith Rees, Jack Pressett, Grant Greer and Robert S. Kolts all the assistance within our power. If we do I think we have broken the ice and that the A.F.T. is in Utah to stay. We have but to look at the state and national elective and appointive officials who claim Utah as their home to well realize the great pressures that are being applied to discourage out A.F.T. people in that state. I have heartfelt sympathy for those poor teachers. They are truly struggling to exist as "professional" people. Their salaries are the lowest of all the western states. But when it seemed impossible to make further progress toward organizing additional locals I moved on to assignments awaiting me in California.

President Floyd B. Lyle of Local #832, San Bernardino, California, asked Ben Rust to leave me in the Fontana Area for a few days. Local #832 is mailing out about 2000 copies of the San Bernardino Valley Teacher each month to teachers in the area. Many inquiries about the A.F.T. and the Permanent Health Plan which is available in that area only to union teachers. We felt that a local in the new high school district at Fontana would be a sure bet. We had the support not only from the A.F. L. unions but from the leaders of the big C.I.O. Steelworkers Union at Kaiser Steel as well. In the final analysis it was the tenure question which kept us out of Fontana. The district is a new one and no teacher has as yet attained tenure status. However, several teachers from the Fontana area are joining the San Bernardino local. I have little doubt about having an A.F.T. local in Fontana when teachers reach tenure status.