

An O.S.E.A. Reporter Visits an A. F. of L. Meeting

Curiosity took the writer to a handbill announced meeting of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees held in Salem the night of May 21, 1947. The meeting was to be addressed by Paul Walker, Oregon Representative, and by James L. McCormack, West Coast Regional Representative. Although the attendance was disappointing, about twelve were present, the meeting was interesting.

Your reporter learned that the A. F. S. C. & M. E., affiliated with the A. F. of L., has 1100 locals in the United States and came into being in Wisconsin in the early '30's. It is now represented in 47 states. Mr. McCormack pointed out the advantages of large, national organizations with hired experts available to assist any individual member when necessary. It was also indicated that the organization stands ready to furnish legal protection to its members and to compel proper administration of employer-employee relationships by means of its persuasive powers. Mr. McCormack pointed out the national basis on which his organization works, the support given one local by other affiliated branches, and the gains made in other states and by Oregon's counties and cities through the efforts of the A. F. S. C. & M. E.

Mr. Walker gave a report of his activities as their representative before the last Oregon legislature, which report consisted in large part of explaining why their 14-point legislative program progressed so little. He stated that the A. F. S. C. & M. E. introduced the Civil Service Act in 1943 without success, and in 1945, with the aid of the O. S. E. A., succeeded in getting it made law. They tried to get the "open back door" of Civil Service closed, but admitted that opposition from the O. S. E. A. stopped their effort. They promise renewal of the effort in 1949.

In way of explanation, our present Civil Service "open back door" means that the right to dismiss an employee remains with the appointing authority after a public hearing of the issues.

Pay Raises Stressed

Another point in their program was for automatic pay raises. It was claimed that O. S. E. A. objections defeated their chances on this point. I think the readers realize that *Civil Service was set up on a merit basis and automatic raises might come to undeserving employees to the detriment of morale and without fairness to the deserving!* The A.F.S.C. & M.E. said they did get legislative O.K. on the "statement of pay-roll deduction" issue, even in spite of the avowed displeasure of the O. S. E. A.! *As I recall, the O. S. E. A. sponsored and supported this point.* They admitted failure to get regular pay days set by statute for the Highway Department, stating that the O. S. E. A. opposed the measure. My memory says this department has regular pay days. Any O. S. E. A. opposition at the legislature was an attempt to establish departmental policies without unnecessary laws.

The most serious charge against the O. S. E. A. was that they did not have enough figures on hand so the A.F.S.C. & M.E. could get full prior service credit for state employees. They were certain they could have made the grade, even with our support, *if we had only had better cost data to show that the expense to the State would be small.* Mr. Walker admitted that the figures which bore the greatest weight came from the Public Retirement offices in Portland. The record shows that the O. S. E. A. figures, independently obtained, were more accurate, though not acceptable to the Retirement Board of officials or to the A.F.S.C. & M.E. *The O.S.E.A. has been invited by legislators*