

I am here to speak for our executive secretary who could not be present because of another engagement away from Washington. As executive secretary emeritus of the organization I am authorized, and I hope qualified, to report for our organization in support of the two bills under discussion in this hearing. Indeed I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to be here in view of the fact that I had the privilege of attending a similar hearing a year or so ago.

There is no question about the interest and vital concern of the people who comprise our membership.

Of the several reasons why I am glad to speak in support of H.R. 4172 and H.R. 4174, I shall mention only two, largely because the time available encourages brevity and because other witnesses admirably covered what we would say in a more detailed and complete presentation.

First, it is worthy of note that the organization with which I have been associated for so many years has, almost since I can remember, joined with other groups in advocating Federal recognition of and support of the arts, including music.

About 1921 our organization participated in the support of a bill to establish a forerunner of the present proposed legislation, introduced by Senator Fletcher. This bill pertained to the establishment of a National Conservatory of Music and for many years, from 1919 on, the Music Educators National Conference maintained a continuing committee activity in the general area of this type of Federal recognition of the cultural arts. Joined with the MENC in these developments were several other organizations, including the National Federation of Music Clubs, the Music Teachers National Association, and others. From time to time various bills were introduced with spreading cooperation from various organizations, including the American Federation of Musicians and others. These efforts continued through succeeding years. The issues were kept alive but nothing happened that attached the word "Federal" to any kind of music and arts project until the establishment of the Works Progress Administration music and arts programs in the early 1930's. A single quotation here from Guy Maier, Assistant to the WPA Federal Music Director:

"Hundreds of (its) musicians have already been reabsorbed in gainful, private employment, their skills intact, and even enhanced, through their activities on the projects. They have been engaged by major symphony orchestras and opera companies, by school districts, bands, theaters, and by recreational centers * * * Extraordinary impetus has been given to the American composer through the activities of the Federal music project. Since October 1935 more than 5,000 compositions written by 1,500 American composers have had public performances, bringing to light a creative opulence undreamed of 2 years ago. No one contends that all these compositions have lasting merit; but if even one or two masterpieces are discovered, the cause of American music will have been splendidly advanced."¹

One more reference to emphasize the reasons why the Music Educators National Conference believes in, supports, and begs for favorable action on H.R. 4172 and H.R. 4174; respectively, a bill for the establishment of a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts and the National Cultural Development Act. These two bills essentially belong together. If a poll could be made it seems altogether likely that the support of our citizens would be overwhelming.

Indeed, endorsement and support of the arts with such programs as provided in these bills will be a veritable "shot in the arm" to thousands of voting citizens who are in a position in their communities to help develop, among other facets of strengthening the growth of our culture, some of the "do it yourself" agencies in the various areas of the arts.

The second point is stated simply—and most of us who are familiar with the international situation know it is a pertinent issue: Federal endorsement and support of the arts in the manner prescribed by these bills will do much to enhance the stature and status of the United States around the world—especially among those countries which have given recognition to the cultural aspects of the lives of their own citizens.

And now I speak of Russia. It would not be necessary to hold hearings, make speeches, or argue the appropriations in connection with a similar subject in the Soviet Union. In fact what we are arguing for here is already recognized

¹ From "Federal Music Project's Contribution to American Music," an address by Guy Maier, Assistant to the Federal Music Director, at the 1938 convention of the Music Educators National Conference, St. Louis, Mo., MENC 1938 Yearbook, p. 96.