

STATEMENT OF WOODROW F. STRONG, PRESIDENT, AMALGAMATED MEAT CUTTERS AND BUTCHER WORKMEN OF NORTH AMERICA, LOCAL NO. 593, AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, GREATER WASHINGTON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Chairman, I am Woodrow F. Strong, President of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, Local #593, and First Vice-President of the Greater Washington Central Labor Council.

The Central Labor Council of the Greater Washington Area has always been interested in adequate salaries for public schoolteachers in the District of Columbia. In fact, organized labor has always placed great emphasis on education. The pioneers of our movement, from the beginning, realized that public schools were the vehicle through which the average individual with ability could elevate himself in the world. More important still, real education requires competent teachers, and an adequate salary is one means of attracting men and women able to give our children the schooling they need in this rapidly changing society.

To be sure, it is not the only way to secure individuals of the highest calibre in our schools. Dedicated teachers desire other benefits, such as satisfactory working conditions, including fringe benefits. Still, adequate financial remuneration is a sine qua non, if we expect to fill the vacancies in our system with competent personnel. As a matter of fact, we probably cannot hold the best teachers we now have in our system unless we make better salaries available. Other large cities, with problems like ours, are offering them more.

The specific area, however, in which the testimony of the Central Labor Council will be concentrated, is that of comparison with the wage scales in other areas of employment. We believe in fair pay and a high standard of living for all American workers. We are, nevertheless, acutely conscious of the relatively poor compensation paid to our public schoolteachers. They must spend large sums of money to prepare themselves for their work.

Teachers, moreover, cannot stand still in their profession. Qualifying for a position and starting to work is only a beginning. In this age of advancing knowledge, they must constantly study to keep abreast of the times. That takes time, energy and money—particularly the last. They simply cannot be expected to make the requisite initial financial outlay and, then, keep on spending, on their present salaries.

Referring again to wages paid in other occupations, meatcutters start with \$6000 a year and work up to \$12,000 annually. Another example is that of employees in the retail sales area. They begin with similar wages and benefits as the ones we have just mentioned. After a short period, however, they advance to pay scales above those of teachers with similar work experience. Neither group has to spend the initial outlay of a four-year college education before entering their work.

We wish our children to get the best education possible. Organized labor, furthermore, realizes that it cannot get this with our paying what it is worth. Dedication and self-sacrifice will no longer be enough to get what we need in this changing civilization.

The American spirit of fair play, as well as ordinary self-interest both demand a more realistic system of pay and other benefits for our public schoolteachers.