

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON

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The Honorable,

The Secretary of Agriculture.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Reference is made to your letter of February 27, 1942, as follows:

"There are enclosed vouchers presenting claims for the following named claimants, requesting payment for work performed in making photographs and mats for this department:

Lakota Photo Engraving Company	43.85
Lakota Photo Engraving Company	7.00
Lakota Photo Engraving Company	10.00
Standard Mat Service	9.12
Mississippi Engraving Company	3.00
Peter Galross	3.00
The Resinger Studios	9.00
Beaver Engraving Company Inc.	10.03
Tanner Studio	3.00
C. E. Willis	29.36

"Certification of these claims has been denied by the Audit Division of your office because it appeared to them that the purpose of securing these cuts and mats was for publicizing members of the State Committee and other employees of the Department.

"In accomplishing the purposes of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration programs, as outlined by Congress, the objectives can be reached only by a more thorough knowledge of such programs by the farmers. It is therefore a responsibility of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to encourage as great a participation as possible. Various educational activities are conducted to acquaint the farmers with the different phases of the programs and with the personnel who administer the programs, and it is this knowledge of the fact that those employed to conduct actual operation of the farm program are themselves farmers that gives rise to a

greater degree of confidence than would otherwise be true. This fact is substantiated by the relationship usually existent between the farmers and the county and community committeemen, since these committeemen are elected by the participating farmers from their own group, and since the State committeemen are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, many farmers in the State do not realize that they are also farmers working with them for the common cause and for mutual benefit. Therefore, to increase the confidence of the farmers in their State committeemen and other Agricultural Adjustment Administration officials, it is believed that the method of presenting their positions through the medium of pictures with brief descriptive titles is a more effective means of gaining this confidence than any other method, since it is a known fact that pictures always create a more vivid impression than any written document, insofar as a large number of people are concerned. Section 9 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C., sec. 590i) provides:

"The Secretary is authorized to conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the conditions and factors affecting, and methods of accomplishing most effectively, the policy and purposes of section 7(a). Notwithstanding any provision of existing law, the secretary is authorized to make public such information as he deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act ..."

"The purpose, therefore, in procuring the reproductions of portraits of certain individuals is not, as suggested in the exceptions taken, for the purpose of publicizing the individuals involved, but is rather for the purpose of making public a type of information which I find to be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. Since the appropriation involved is one made for carrying out this law, it is believed that methods involved constituted a proper means for the purpose.

"It is therefore my belief that the attached vouchers present legitimate claims, chargeable against the appropriation 'Conservation and Use of Agricultural Land Resources, Department of Agriculture', and I therefore recommend your favorable consideration for payment of the same."

The action heretofore taken by this office in denying certification

of the vouchers covering the items listed in your letter appears to have been correct on the basis of the evidence submitted in support of the vouchers. However, in view of the explanations now made in your letter and your finding to the effect that the publication of pictures of new members of a State committee is making public a type of information necessary to carry out the provisions of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, I am today giving instructions for the allowance of the claims in question, if correct in other respects.

Respectfully,

(Signed) Lindsay O. Warren
Comptroller General
of the United States.