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Public Relations Committee Report

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PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Your committee on Public Relations is pleased to submit its annual report as follows:

Sometime during the month of June, 1946, the Hon. William A. Jacobson, Judge of the District Court, Williston, North Dakota, prepared a questionnaire that was sent to all of the licensed attorneys of the State. This questionnaire was prepared for the purpose of obtaining information from the members of the Bar of this State on the amount of uncompensated services rendered by them in the promotion of the war efforts. According to the 1945 list of licensed attorneys, there were a total of 508 licensed attorneys out of which 80 were in the Armed Forces. Out of the questionnaires that were sent out only 245 were returned or approximately 50%. Assuming that the attorneys who failed to return their questionnaire did the same amount of work as those who returned them, the information hereinafter compiled would represent only about 50% of the work actually done by the licensed members of the Bar of this State.

It has been rather difficult to analyze the information given in the questionnaires, because in some cases the answers were not very definite. However, in compiling this data your committee has adopted conservative figures so as to be sure that the time spent and the services performed would be the very minimum amount.

BOND DRIVES

Ninety-five attorneys acted as chairman for their respective Districts in the various Bond Drives and 482, including the chairman participated in the various Bond drives. The time actually spent by the participants was 90,470 hours. Reducing this to days on the basis of seven hours per day it would amount to a total of 12,724 days.

SELECTIVE SERVICE

Thirty-two of the attorneys acted as either chairman of a Selective Service Board or as Government Appeal Agent. However, most of them reporting acted as Government Appeal Agents. The total number of attorneys participating in the Selective Service system, including the chairman or Government Appeal Agent, on the basis of the questionnaires submitted was 185. The total time spent was 139,053 hours. Reducing this to days on the basis of 7 hours per day would mean a total of 19,866 days.

CHARITIES

There were 47 attorneys who acted as chairman of various charities, which included War Chest, Red Cross and U.S.O. The total number participating in these activities, including the chairman was 427 and the number of hours spent was 27,810. Reducing this to the number of days at seven hours per day would amount of 3,973 days.

APPEARANCES FOR SERVICEMEN

In determining this service on the basis of the questionnaires, it was necessary to adopt a very conservative figure, because accurate information was not submitted. However, by a very conservative estimate the attorneys reporting represented servicemen in 177 cases. This does not include services given by attorneys, but only appearances in Court proceedings such as evictions, divorces and foreclosures. According to the information submitted by the reports, every lawyer

assisted servicemen in a great many ways, including preparation of Powers of Attorney, Wills, Transfers of Property and many other legal matters.

APPEARANCES FOR INTERNED ENEMY ALIENS

The services rendered by the attorneys in this category was confined principally to the members of the Morton and Burleigh County Bars. This was done at the special request of the officers of the Immigration Department. This type of service necessarily involves a considerable amount of time and legal preparation. The Immigration Department requested that the Bar take on this work so as to give the interned enemy aliens a fair and impartial hearing before the Immigration Department. The extent of this work cannot be adequately set forth in this report, but according to the answers in the questionnaires at least 19 deportation cases were handled with innumerable visits to Fort and time spent in preparing and submitting Briefs. Attorney General Lincoln to obtain the necessary information for preparing the cases and time spent in preparing and submitting Briefs. Attorney General Alvin C. Strutz and his entire staff spent a considerable amount of time in handling these cases and preparing Briefs. The small amount of money that was raised by these interned enemy aliens was used to purchase and place in the State Law Library at Bismarck, certain legal works that otherwise could not ordinarily be purchased for the State Library.

SERVICES RENDERED WITH OPA

According to the answers submitted at least 28 attorneys rendered various types of service in connection with the OPA set up. The total time given by them in this service was 19,476 hours. Reducing that to days on the basis of seven hours per day would be a total of 2,782 days.

MEMBER OF ARMED FORCES

From the questionnaires returned 49 attorneys were in the Armed Forces. However, the list of licensed attorneys for 1945 shows a total of 80 attorneys in the Armed Forces.

OTHER INFORMATION

There was a vast amount of other services rendered by attorneys as shown from the answers. A good many of them acted as State Hearing Officers. One reported the recovery of \$8,000.00 of insurance for a widow without compensation. Others participated in the issuance of war bonds and U.S.O. Book Drive activities. In addition Attorney O. B. Burtness acted as chairman of the war work committee of the State Bar Association, who worked in conjunction with the American Bar Association and the War and Navy Departments. Mr. Burtness appointed several attorneys throughout the State on this committee and has submitted a report along with his questionnaire. Approximately 60 lawyers in this State acted on this committee and handled a vast amount of legal work for the servicemen. There were any number of divorce actions handled by members of this committee with very little, if any, compensation. It was done on a voluntary basis and the actual compensation paid did not cover the actual expense to the lawyers in handling such matters. Mr. Burtness alone estimates that he spent at least 600 hours in this type of work without the stenographic work in connection therewith.

It is hoped that this report will reflect some idea of the amount of uncompensated services rendered by the Legal Profession of this State.

It is not intended to in any way glorify the lawyers or the Legal Profession, because all of the work was done by the lawyers freely and without any idea of receiving any credit or reward. On the other hand it might serve in a small way to counteract some of the misguided and misinformed public opinion to the effect that the lawyer is more or less a parasite on society.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Public Relations
and the Bar.

ROY A. PLOYHAR, Chairman.

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