

MINUTES OF MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TEXAS CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

DALLAS, TEXAS, SEPTEMBER 21, 1934

Chairman Cline called the meeting of the Executive Committee to order at 2:30 p.m., September 21, at the Baker Hotel, Dallas. Present: Cline, Thomas, Middleton, Hughes, and Mayes (Secretary). Absent: Ochs. Cline read a letter from Ochs regretting his inability to be present and expressing his views as to the relative importance of secondary or historic celebrations.

Middleton moved that the two additional members selected by the Dallas Centennial Committee be added to the Executive Committee. Hughes seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Briggs stated that R. L. Thornton, Chairman of the Dallas Ways and Means Committee, and Fred F. Florence, Chairman of the Dallas Executive Committee, at a formal meeting of the Dallas Centennial Executive Committee were nominated for membership on the Executive Committee of the Centennial Commission pursuant to the authorization of the Commission at its meeting in Austin, September 9. The two new members were brought in and introduced.

Chairman Cline invited Briggs to sit with the Committee in session today, the entire Committee agreeing.

Cline stated to the new members that the Commission had agreed that Dallas should be permitted to add two members to the Executive Committee, these two to be chosen by the Dallas Committee. Briggs had presented their names, the Executive Committee had unanimously voted to receive them, and they had been officially added to the Committee.

Cline said that two things should be emphasized today: (1) Time in the program is very important to build the great Centennial wanted by Texans. (2) In order to plan intelligently and achieve success, the money must be at hand. There are three possible sources: central city, State, and Federal Government. The Commission is happy over the splendid bid made by Dallas. Dallas offered nearly \$8,000,000.00. State and Federal participation are now needed to build the Centennial. He sought the reaction of the Committee to asking the present Legislature for an appropriation. This is the major reason for calling this meeting--the advisability of presenting this matter to the Legislature now.

Briggs for the Dallas Committee reported that the Dallas organization has been perfected with a Centennial Committee of 400-500 representative citizens. Subordinate to this, there is the Dallas Centennial Executive Committee of thirty-five specially chosen persons; Florence is Chairman of this Committee. A Ways and Means Committee of nine members has also been named; Thornton is Chairman of this Committee. The city government has already put into motion machinery to publicize and submit the bond issue to be voted on within forty-five days. These details are being worked out with the Mayor and city Manager by experts and representatives of the Dallas Centennial Committee and will be ready for passage next Wednesday. The bond issue is for \$1,000,000.00. The town is now being organized for the Campaign under the direction of the Centennial Committee and the Ways and Means Committee. In the meantime, a small group is preparing a plan of operation to be submitted to the Legislature, if called upon, to indicate what State monies are to be spent for, and can report to the Commission within ten to fourteen days. Dallas is "Centennial-crazy." There is no opposition. All business is behind it. Dallas will fulfill the obligations assumed by it under the acceptance of its proposal.

Cline stated that a special Centennial committee is devoting itself to the structure of legislative means of revenue and practical things to place before the Legislature.

Briggs said that the Publicity Bureau will know what the historic cities -- San Antonio, Huston, Colliad, Huntsville, ect.--will want. People designated by the Publicity Bureau are interviewing these cities in order that their wishes may go into a program to be presented to the Legislature.

Cline said that Federal participation will depend entirely on the interest shown by the financial support of the State Legislature. The Federal Government cannot be asked for money unless the State shows its confidence in the Centennial by making an appropriation. The Centennial Commission has been invited to appear before the Legislature Monday.

Thomas stated that he had been in Austin this week contracting the Governor and the Legislature. They are not hilariously enthusiastic for the Centennial. The Governor is friendly and sympathetic, somewhat undecided as to presenting the Centennial subject at this special session, though willing to submit the question to the Legislature when the Commission asks for it. The Senate has passed a resolution opposing another special session and could not get a bill through this session. This Committee should endeavor to get the Senate to rescind that resolution and ask for another session to consider a Centennial appropriation.

The group then discussed at some length ways and means of getting money for the support of the Centennial.

Hughes presented the following motion: Resolved that the invitation of the Senate to the Texas Centennial Commission to appear before it next Monday be accepted with appreciation. Thornton seconded the motion, and it was adopted unanimously.

Florence moved that the President be authorized to phone Mrs. Valney W. Taylor and authorize her to send at the expense of this Commission a wire, dictated by the President, to every county Advisory Board Chairman in Texas that she has a record of. Middleton seconded the motion, and it was adopted unanimously.

A telegram from Lieutenant Governor Witt to President Thomas was received and read, as follows: "Senate adopted a resolution inviting persons interested in the Centennial to appear before it Monday morning at 10 a.m."

Middleton moved that three speakers representing the Commission should address the Legislature, these to be Ochs, Cline, and Judge John C. Townes. Thornton seconded this motion, and it was adopted unanimously.

Briggs presented the report of the Publicity Bureau, as follows:

Pursuant to the instructions of the Commission, under resolution adopted at its meeting in Austin on September 9, we have established a publicity bureau for the continuation of the publicity campaign inaugurated two months ago, and have begun a service which is designed to carry the message of the Centennial, through the spoken and the printed word, into every precinct of the State for such period of time as the Commission may direct.

I. The objective of the campaign we are seeking to achieve by stressing certain distinct yet homogeneous themes, as follows:

1. The state-wide aspect of the Texas Centennial, reflecting with equal prominence the historic celebrations prescribed in the statute, and the Central Exposition, likewise of statutory origin, as integral, inseparable elements in Texas' presentation to the world of the accomplishments of one hundred years of independence.

2. The benefits to Texas inevitably flowing from the execution of the Commission's lofty and elaborate plan for the Texas Centennial, being (a) spiritual, (b) social, and (c) economic, in essence and certain of contribution to the refinement of Texas culture and the acceleration of the State's commercial and industrial processes.

II. Through the Advisory Board, which covers the State like a blanket, we are organizing in every county, preferably under the direction of the County Chairmen of the Advisory group, a speakers bureau, comprehending as many active speakers as the needs of the locality may require.

Short speeches, ranging from two hundred to a thousand words, are being prepared by experts in speech structure who know, severally, the romantic, the historic and the economic side of the subject of Texas and the Centennial, these writers being largely drawn from members of the faculty of the University of Texas, Southern Methodist University and foremost newspaper editors. Additionally, outlines of speeches or skeletons to be dressed by the speakers, themselves, are being similarly prepared. This speech staff is reaching the point of ultimate use through the Advisory Board organization.

Specific instructions are going forward to the local Advisory Board Chairmen, who are our local speakers bureau Chairmen, with a view to the facilitation of their own work in selecting speakers, enlisting their co-operation and arranging for audiences for them to address.

The detail of the direction of this far-flung organization is administered by the publicity bureau through correspondence under the joint signatures of President Thomas and Mrs. Taylor.

III. The complementary part of the publicity campaign addresses itself to newspapers and magazines published in Texas. It falls into three grand-divisions, namely, those of (1) spot news, (2) the romantic and historical, and (3) the economic.

Trained reporters have been engaged for the preparation of the current news of the Centennial, feature writers of reputation and skill to treat the romantic and historic aspects of the subject, and experts in the realm of economics for the business side of the undertaking.

Compositions touching the romantic and historic themes, upon delivery at the bureau, and after editing, are immediately transmitted to the Texas Historical Society at Austin, organized under, and associated with, the University of Texas, for verification of historical data, to the end that we may avoid the pitfalls of inaccuracy.

Our copy, of whatsoever character, designed for publication is edited and revised by a trained newspaper editor of nearly thirty years of experience covering the pivotal editorial desks of the San Antonio Express, The Huston Post and the Dallas News. He happens to be available for this service because of an infirmity of the lower limbs that has lately taken him out of active newspaper work. He is a graduate of the University of Texas, widely read, a vivid and forcible writer, with a wide knowledge of Texas and her people, and we are extremely fortunate in having him available for the indispensable desk work of our bureau.

Every piece of copy transmitted for publication is originally prepared or edited to conform to two cardinal, inviolable rules:

1. The name of no member of the Commission, or employee thereof, shall ever appear in the copy.
2. The state-wide aspect of the Texas Centennial must be paramounted in the first paragraph, with specific reference to the historical celebrations in their statutory order, before the mention of the Central Exposition at Dallas.

Under these two rules we seek to avoid (1) the slightest personalization of the Commission's mechanism, and (2) overcome

the spirit of unrest in the historic territory manifesting itself after the award of the Centennial Exposition to Dallas.

Such interviews as are to be used (and there will be many of them) will come from leading Centennial exponents (other than Commissioners) in San Antonio and Houston and other cities and towns in the State, heads of great organizations and institutions, and conspicuous and influential farmers and ranchmen who are in the constant contact with the rural population.

IV. An integral part of the publicity campaign is a series of correspondence addressed exclusively to the members of the Legislature, actual and prospective, seeking to impress upon them the ultimate return to Texas, both the State government and the State as a whole, to flow from adequate advances of money for the Centennial's account.

V. Assisting us in the supervision of the bureau, with especial stress upon the direction of the speaking program, is a gentleman of wide Southwestern acquaintance, experienced in organization through many years of divisional management for the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, himself an eloquent and effective speaker, versed in the technique of composition for mass appeal, and thoroughly seasoned in the art of inducing the maximum of effort from volunteer helpers. His services are at present donated, but there should be a substantial honorarium awarded him when they terminate.

We have deemed it both right and advisable, in view of prospective federal aid, to comply with the letter and the spirit of WPA and accordingly are conforming to the rules governing minimum wages and the distribution of service over a forty-hour week.

Along the foregoing lines, and under the foregoing limitations, the machinery for this work has been set up on a basis that will carry it under the appropriation made for it for a period of a few weeks only. The uttermost economy consistent with efficiency is being adhered to in the activities of the bureau, but it is even now apparent that if the Legislature should fail to act within the next thirty days, the campaign must be abruptly closed or refinanced.

We request your formal approval of the program as outlined, or your modification of it in keeping with your wishes.

Hughes moved to approve the report "in toto" as read; Middleton seconded the motion, and it was unanimously adopted.

A lengthy but informal discussion of sources of revenue followed, and it was agreed that ways and means of raising State revenues should be worked out in detail later by the special committee and submitted for the consideration of the Legislature.

The Secretary was instructed to wire Governor Witt and also to wire the members of the Commission to meet at 8 a.m. at the Driskill in Austin and with the Legislature at 10 a.m. The Executive Committee decided to hold a session Monday afternoon at Austin.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 6 p.m. to meet in Austin, Monday afternoon, September 24, 1934.