

Calendar No. 866

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1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 881

EDWARD C ROSER

MAY 17 (calendar day, MAY 19), 1926.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. NYE, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 6466]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 6466) for the relief of Edward C. Roser, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with the recommendation that the bill do pass without amendment.

The facts in the case are fully set forth in House Report No. 478, Sixth-ninth Congress, first session, which is appended hereto and made a part of this report.

[House Report No. 478, Sixty-ninth Congress first session]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 6466) for the relief of Edward C. Roser, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass with the following amendment:

In line 11 strike out the figures "\$637.50" and insert in lieu thereof "\$737.50."

STATEMENT OF FACTS

From the evidence in the case it appears that during the year 1918, from May 1 to June 30, which was in the midst of the war-savings stamp drive, Post Office Clerk Edward C. Roser, of the city of New York, had charge of the sale of war-savings stamps. Mr. Roser performed very meritorious service in this respect; established stamp booths in many places and organized motor trucks with singers and visited many points on Broadway. He sold on an average weekly as high as \$8,000 to \$10,000 in war-savings stamps. Some nights his sales amounted to from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

While assigned to this work Mr. Roser reported several shortages, the exact amounts of which it is impossible to state. In several instances he had shortages caused by possible depredations while letters containing war-savings stamps were being forwarded to addressees in the registered mail, which fact was reported at the time. The Post Office Department is satisfied that the losses took place as alleged.

Considering the valuable services the claimant was rendering from motives of duty and patriotism, your committee recommends that his claim be granted.

The losses scheduled by Mr. Roser amount to \$737.50, but in making his claim he deducts the value of a \$100 bond which he

received as a prize for selling war savings stamps. Your committee believes that such a deduction is not proper and further recommends that the amount of the claim be changed from \$637.50 to \$737.50.

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, D. C. January 30, 1926.

HON. CHARLES L. UNDERHILL,
Chairman Committee on Claims,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. UNDERHILL: Kindly refer again to your letters of January 5 and January 12, asking an opinion with respect to a bill (H. R. 6466) for the relief of Edward C. Roser in the amount of \$637.50 on account of losses sustained by him, as an employee of the New York, N. Y., post office, in selling war-savings stamps.

Similar bills (H. R. 10119 and H. R. 7345) were introduced during the Sixty-seventh and Sixty-eighth Congresses, and were submitted to this department for an opinion. I inclose a copy of a letter addressed by my predecessor on August 12, 1922, to Hon. George W. Edmonds, then chairman of the Committee on Claims, House of Representatives, and a copy of a letter addressed by me to Mr. Edmonds on March 13, 1924. In both letters favorable action on the bill was recommended and it was suggested that the amount of the claim should be increased to \$737.50, the actual amount shown to have been lost by Mr. Roser. I am glad to renew these recommendations.

The Director, Bureau of the Budget, has advised me that such a recommendation is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Yours very truly,

HARRY S. NEW, *Postmaster General.*

MARCH 13, 1924.

HON. GEORGE W. EDMONDS,
Chairman Committee on Claims,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. EDMONDS: In compliance with your request of March 5 for an opinion as to the merits of a bill for the relief of Edward C. Roser (H. R. 7345), on account of losses sustained in the sale of war savings stamps, there is inclosed a copy of a letter addressed to you on August 12, 1922, by the Hon. Hubert Work, my predecessor as Postmaster General, concerning a similar or identical bill (H. R. 10119). A report by a post-office inspector (Case No. 94 357-C) and other papers accompanied that letter.

I am glad to renew the recommendation of favorable action on the bill and invite particular attention to the last paragraph of my predecessor's letter, with which I agree.

Very truly yours,

HARRY S. NEW, *Postmaster General.*

AUGUST 12, 1922.

HON. GEORGE W. EDMONDS,
Chairman Committee on Claims,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. EDMONDS: Kindly refer to your communication of March 7, 1922, requesting my opinion as to the merits of a bill (H. R. 10119) for the relief of Edward C. Roser, an employee of the New York, N. Y., post office, on account of losses sustained in the sale of war-savings stamps.

A report by the post-office inspector who investigated this matter (Case No. 94357-C) has been received, and I am inclosing a copy for the information of your committee, together with copies of an affidavit by Mr. Roser and a statement by Mr. Richard Morrissey, assistant superintendent of delivery.

Owing to the absence of exact information concerning the several transactions, with some other considerations, the losses can not well be adjusted through the authority allowed to the Postmaster General by law. Yet the department is satisfied that the losses took place as alleged, and that, considering the voluntary and valuable service which Mr. Roser was rendering from motives of duty and

patriotism, under conditions of exceptional difficulty, they can not properly be attributed to any culpable negligence on his part. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the case is a proper one for the granting of special relief by the Congress, and I recommend favorable action on the bill in question.

It will be noted that the losses scheduled by Mr. Roser amount to \$737.50, but that in making his claim he deducts the value of a \$100 bond which he received as a prize for selling war-savings stamps. I do not believe such a deduction is proper, and I accordingly suggest that in the event of favorable consideration the amount of the claim be changed from \$637.50 to \$737.50.

Sincerely yours,

HUBERT WORK.

STATE OF NEW YORK,
County of New York, ss:

I, Edward C. Roser, being first duly sworn, depose and say:

I am at present employed as special clerk in the general post office, assigned to the auditor's office. While employed as clerk at Grand Central Station during the years 1918 and 1919, I was elected by the clerks at that station to represent them as executive member of the Post Office War Savings Society. My duties were to form teams and keep them supplied with stamps at all times. It turned out that there was very keen competition in the New York post office. Our office was not making a very good showing, so I interviewed Superintendent Morrissey and laid out my plans for making an effort at larger sales. He gave me full power to act. After considerable effort I managed to obtain a truck from the Peter Doelger Brewing Co. They decorated same with flags and colored electric lights, also a large W. S. S. electric sign and told me I could have truck and chauffeur whenever I so desired, and could keep him until I finished. The next thing I had to get was a piano. I visited a few of the music publishers and finally obtained a piano, together with a player, from Leo Feist Music Co., and their best singers to accompany the truck. We then started out in earnest. Every day upon completing my tour of duty the truck was at the door waiting for me to start out. I took my stamp box and left, generally locating at Times Square. I made the appeal and speeches from the truck; sometimes I secured volunteer speakers. Sales amounting to \$10,000 and sometimes \$15,000 in one night. I frequently was compelled to send back for more stamps. In that way I managed to bring the sales of my station above any other in this city. I generally remained out on this truck until the last sale was made, from 1 a. m. to 3 a. m. This was done entirely on my own time after my tour of duty had expired. I then went back to the office at night and had the assistant superintendent in charge put the stamps in the safe after I checked same up. I had several losses while on the truck which I am satisfied happened mostly in damp weather, stamps getting stuck and double sheets being handed out in place of single ones. My total shortage while on truck was \$163.20. When I found out about the amount of the shortages happening every night I wanted to quit, but was urged by the superintendent and clerks to continue as we were leading all stations. I also started a cabaret and theater drive. In order to make this a success it was necessary for me to interview the various theatrical agencies to see if I could secure the services of any well-known theatrical stars. I met with immediate success and secured the following who were of great assistance to me all during the drive: Clifton Crawford, Ray Raymond, six Brown brothers, Fred Stone, Florence Moore, Blanche Bates, Belle Story, the Winter Garden Chorus. My method in selling stamps with these stars was to go into a prominent cabaret or theater and announce who I had with me and then for a certain amount of sales would put on a number. This drive netted in one week \$125,849.53 worth of stamps. At the end of this drive I discovered I was short \$58.80 I knew there were nightly shortages, as girls came to me saying they had been given wrong change. As they were all volunteers and there at my request I felt that I could not ask them to make good. They were all chorus girls from the Winter Garden through the courtesy of Shuberts. While I was doing the speaking, asking for certain amounts to put a performance on, these girls went around the tables with the stamps. I had also established various booths in different places in which I had placed theatrical and society women, all volunteers, from early morning until late at night. Following is a list of the booths:

Grand Central railroad station, 3 booths; Grand Central Palace, 2 booths; Madison Square Garden, 2 booths; Public Library, Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue; Biltmore Hotel; Commodore Hotel; Forty-second Street and

Vanderbilt Avenue; W. S. S. Metal Market; 469 Fifth Avenue; outside B. Altman & Co.; Hotel Astor, and many other places where anything of importance was going on.

These booths were supplied by me with stamps for which I personally was responsible and kept most of them going for one year and one-half. I had the management at each place where a booth was located furnish me with this booth and with decorations, which were all cheerfully given. There were losses from time to time by the volunteers who accompanied me. They seemed small at first, but in totaling them up for the time I had booths losses amounted to \$127.60. During the hotel drive I took checks for amount of stamps required and when checks came through bank cleared, I sent stamps to the parties who gave the checks. I received as high as 50 checks per night. In sending the stamps out by mail small amounts of war-savings stamps were not registered, but large amounts were all registered. Their dispatch, as well as the counting of stamps and sealing of envelopes, was witnessed by Clerk Murphy and Subcarrier Lippman. But on one occasion an envelope containing \$200 worth of stamps sent to J. D. Rummel, Charleston, S. C., was not received, and in looking this up all three of us remembered sending it, but it must have slipped into the ordinary pile and went through but was never received. After looking into the matter and not wishing any reflection to come on the Post Office Department, I paid this claim in installments, as continued losses had made me short in my personal funds. There were several smaller amounts which never were received, amounting in all to \$100. We generally placed in the envelopes the amount of W. S. stamps, and if it did not make up the amount, put in postage stamps for the difference. There is only one more shortage which I failed to mention. A soldier selling stamps for me for quite a time, in fact a sergeant, sent to me by the War Savings Society with a card as volunteer worker. After working three months he failed to show up one day, having in his possession \$87.90 worth of stamps. He left his coat behind, which I still have, and tried to locate him through the coat, but was unsuccessful. I had a small book with every little detail in regarding dates, amounts, and probable cause of losses, but this was left at Grand Central Station at the conclusion of the drive and I have not been able to locate it since, although I have all the losses in my sales record book but not dates. I therefore submit the losses as shown above and listed below and swear that they are correct.

J. D. Rummel, stamps not received.....	\$200. 00
Shortage on truck.....	163. 20
Volunteers' shortage at booths.....	127. 60
Stamps stolen.....	87. 90
Shortages in cabarets and theaters.....	58. 80
Small amounts sent by mail and not received.....	100. 00
	<hr/>
	737. 50
Deducting \$100 bond received as prize.....	100. 00
	<hr/>
	637. 50

I received a \$100 Liberty bond from the mayor's committee of women as first prize for the largest amount of sales in the New York Post Office. I deducted that from my claim as shown above. I do not expect remuneration for services rendered. However, in justice to myself and family, I do not believe I should be forced to lose the amount shown, which to me is a great hardship. I trust there may be some way found to reimburse me.

Total sales 1918.....	\$1, 230, 366. 51
Total sales 1919.....	735, 982. 80
	<hr/>
Grand total.....	1, 966, 349. 31

This affidavit is composed of three sheets to which I have affixed my signature.

EDWARD C. ROSER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a post-office inspector, this 25th day of July, 1922.

G. A. SMITH.

NEW YORK, N. Y., *July 26, 1922.*

Subject: New York, N. Y., relative to relief of Edward C. Roser, post-office employee, on account of losses sustained in sale of war-savings stamps during the years 1918 and 1919.

INSPECTOR IN CHARGE,
New York, N. Y.

MY DEAR SIR: The above-numbered case relates to request by Edward C. Roser, an employee attached to the New York, N. Y., post office, for relief on account of losses amounting to \$637.50, alleged to have been sustained by him during the sale of war savings stamps in 1918 and 1919. Personal investigation of this matter was concluded here this date.

On February 19, 1920, Mr. Roser made application to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C., for reimbursement on account of losses claimed to have been sustained by him personally during the war-savings campaign of 1918 and 1919, at which time he was executive member of a team selected at Grand Central Station of the New York City post office. As executive head he was held personally responsible for supplies of stamps furnished him, and his bond as post-office clerk was raised from \$1,000 to \$5,000, which entitled him to receive stamps up to that amount on his I. O. U. He issued stamps to about 20 captains of squads from whom he obtained receipts upon delivery of the stamps. These men accounted to Roser once each day, he in turn made a consolidated accounting to the finance clerk at Grand Central Station, receiving new stamps for cash turned in, thus keeping his stock up to the maximum.

Much rivalry existed between the different post-office stations in the city and as a result of Roser's untiring efforts Grand Central Station headed the list and he personally held the highest individual record for sales of any post-office employee in Greater New York. I am informed by his associates, who also deserve the highest commendation for their work, that Roser seldom ever reached his home and family until long past midnight, and after working strenuously in the evenings he showed up promptly each morning at his post of duty.

Richard Morrissey, former superintendent at Grand Central Station, now assistant superintendent of delivery at the general post office, stated in an interview that Roser gave himself unselfishly and patriotically to the work of selling war-savings stamps during the drive of 1918-19 and deserves the highest praise for the results obtained. He stated also that Roser personally established many booths at prominent points in the city and secured volunteer workers to take charge of them; that Roser mentioned a number of losses to him that occurred from time to time which appeared to be unavoidable, owing to the large volume of sales and the large number of volunteer workers handling stamps for which Roser was entirely responsible; that Roser did not feel that he should hold these persons who were giving their time gratis at his request responsible for errors, and himself made good the amount of such losses; that he has at all times found Roser an earnest, trustworthy, and reliable man; that in addition to the booths established and maintained by Roser and volunteer assistance, he organized a motor-truck campaign, with the volunteer help of prominent vaudeville artists and singers, and carried on this work successfully month after month; and that, considering the results obtained, the extraordinary amount of sales shown, the patriotic zeal manifested by Roser at a time when the Government needed just such men, he believes that steps should be taken to reimburse him for any losses sustained.

Alfred W. Hannon, superintendent at Station G, New York City, was also attached to Grand Central Station in the capacity of a supervisor a large portion of the time during the war-savings drive, and in a recent interview he spoke in the very highest terms of the work of Roser and others associated with him. He was also aware that Roser suffered numerous losses, but stated that in his opinion they were unavoidable, and that Roser, in spite of the fact that the losses were borne by him, was an enthusiastic worker and did not let this deter him from the work in hand. Mr. Hannon stated, further, that he did not believe Roser should be forced to suffer any loss financially because of his unselfish and patriotic devotion to the work he was elected to carry on, and that in his opinion the claim is a just one and should receive proper consideration.

Robert Lippman, carrier No. 3020, station T entered the service in 1916. During the war-savings drive he was attached to Grand Central Station, and was associated with Roser in the sale of stamps. He states that owing to the manner in which the sales were made it was impossible to prevent losses, as stamps were given to volunteer workers who circulated among the vast crowds

gathered around the truck or booth and that many of them made small errors in change or perhaps during damp weather two sheets that had adhered were sold as one, etc., and that Roser held himself responsible for such losses and made good when accounting to the finance clerk. He further stated that some errors were made in mailing out stamps to purchasers; that letters containing small amounts were usually sent by ordinary mail, as the volume of business was so great at times that they could scarcely spare time to register each individual letter, but that care was taken to register any amount above \$5. He recalls the item of \$200 in which that amount was sent to J. D. Rummell, Charleston, S. C., or West Virginia (not positive as to State), for which Roser made good. He is positive the letter containing this amount in stamps was mailed, but believes it was erroneously placed with the pile of letters going by ordinary mail, thus precluding any possibility of tracing it. Lippman stated also that he does not know the amount of losses sustained by Roser, but believes it to be several hundred dollars and that Roser kept a pad or small book in which he noted losses of any consequence.

R. J. Murphy, clerk at Grand Central Station, was also associated with Roser in the sale of war-savings stamps. He corroborates the statement made by carrier Lippman in every detail and believes the estimate submitted by Roser of his losses is a very conservative one. Murphy stated that many small losses were made up by Roser, Lippman, and himself of which no account was made, especially when the amount was few cents or something less than \$1. He says that Roser was the man on whom the responsibility rested and the man who made good all losses of any consequence and that to his own knowledge Roser kept an account of such losses in a small book or pad.

Robert J. Pollitt, former post-office inspector, stated that on one occasion he made an investigation concerning the loss by mail of an amount of stamps mailed by Roser and that he took occasion to note the manner in which the selling campaign was conducted by Roser; that Roser was an enthusiastic worker and deserves high praise for his diligent work; that in his opinion Roser is honest and trustworthy; that he believes Roser suffered the losses claimed and should be reimbursed. He further stated that Roser stated to him that he was getting stuck for some amount almost every day and considering the number of people handling stamps for which Roser was directly responsible he believed the statement to be absolutely true.

Mr. Roser when called upon to furnish dates on which losses occurred was unable to do so. He informed me that he kept a small book in his pocket and that when he had determined that an error had been made he put the amount down in this book and at the end of the campaign he brought forward the totals of losses incurred throughout the campaign and put them under the various headings to show chargeability. In his affidavit herewith, they are listed as follows:

J. D. Rummell (stamps not received).....	\$200. 00
Shortage on truck.....	163. 20
Volunteers' shortage at booths.....	127. 60
Stamps stolen.....	87. 90
Shortages in cabarets and theaters.....	58. 80
Small amounts sent by mail and not received.....	100. 00
Total.....	737. 50

From the amount thus shown he has deducted a bond of \$100 received as a prize, which leaves amount of his claim \$637.50. Mr. Roser carried the totals of his losses to larger book from which he submitted his statement to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. This book does not furnish dates on which losses occurred and the smaller book which he claims would show such dates is no longer in evidence, having been lost or misplaced at Grand Central Station since the campaign ended.

The case is based on a letter from the Third Assistant, under date of April 4, 1922, addressed to the chief inspector, in which reference is made to letters in the files from Hon. George W. Edmonds, chairman of the Committee on Claims of the House of Representatives, and Senator William M. Calder, concerning the claim of Mr. Roser. Reference is also made to case 8011-A, relating to alleged rifling of a registered letter mailed by Mr. Roser to S. S. Crow, containing 20 war-savings stamps, of which only 10 were received by the purchaser. This loss was adjusted by the Postmaster General under section 239, Postal Laws and Regulations, by remitting the amount of \$41.60 in the war-savings stamp account

of the postmaster at New York. The Third Assistant states further that correspondence and reports in the comptroller's office make no reference to other losses by Mr. Roser and that the matter should have careful attention to determine to what extent he is entitled to relief.

As shown above, Mr. Roser is not now in a position to cite specific instances of losses, and the dates on which they occurred therefore such details can not be furnished. I have, however, reached the conclusion after interviewing those who know him intimately that he is worthy of belief. He was appointed sub-clerk July 27, 1912, and made a regular on March 1, 1913. His efficiency rating is 98. He is married and has one child. His salary is now \$1,900 per annum, as special clerk in the office of the auditor at New York, N. Y., where he is at present employed. In addition to information secured relative to the trustworthiness and diligence of Mr. Roser, I was informed that he gave up his vacation period during the year 1918 in order that he might devote that time to the sale of war-savings stamps. The interest manifested by him was unusual and deserves in my opinion such recognition as the department may be able to give. He informed me that while he was in charge of the Grand Central Station war-savings stamp campaign, he disposed of \$1,966,349.31 worth of stamps.

In recognition of his faithful services it is believed the department should give due consideration to his claim and that he should be reimbursed. It is therefore recommended that reimbursement in the sum of \$637.50, be made to Edward C. Roser, special clerk, auditor's office, New York City post office, as provided for under section 239, Postal Laws and Regulations, of 1913, or by special act of Congress, as the case may be, on account of losses sustained by him while in charge of the war-savings campaign, Grand Central Station of the New York City post office, during 1918-19. It is further recommended that the case be closed.

Respectfully yours,

G. A. SMITH, *Post Office Inspector.*



