

Witnesses testifying at a March 10 hearing on the impact of the proposed federal budget reductions on library services included college librarian Forrest Brown, director of the library of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. He spoke to the House Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee on "how federal aid through several programs has helped one fairly typical, small college library during the last two decades." St. Olaf has received \$58,403 from the Higher Education Act II-A College Library Program. Other programs Brown mentioned were the Library Services and Construction Act Title III (Interlibrary Cooperation), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation.

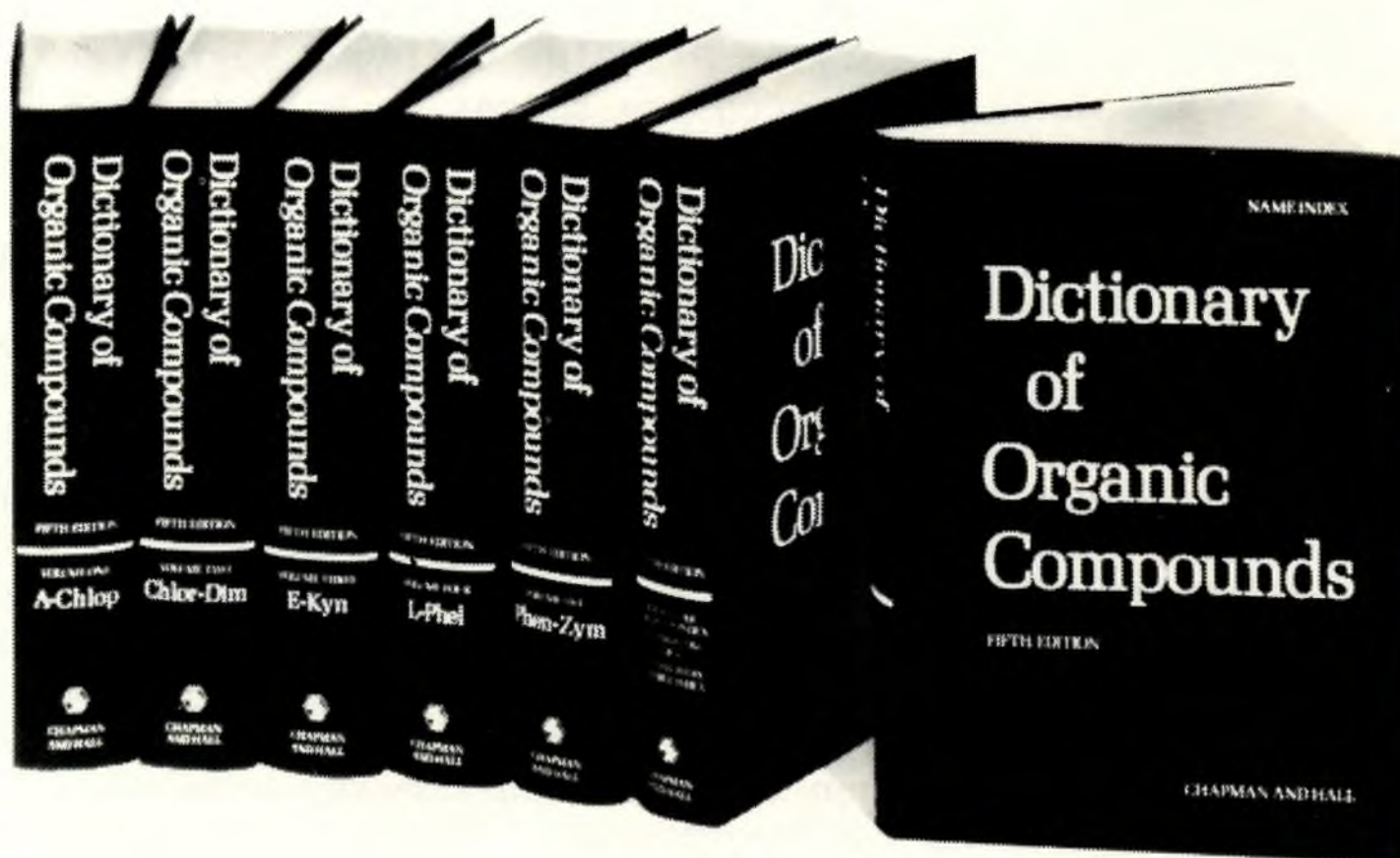
The National Archives and Records Service (NARS), facing a 16% budget cut, was the focus of oversight hearings March 2 and 4 before the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights. The impact of the budget cut on NARS is almost doubled, because 41% of its budget is tied up in fixed costs charged by its parent organization, the General Services Administration, for NARS facilities, including regional centers and presidential libraries. About 140 staff have been let go; interlibrary loan of microfilm reels of census materials from the Fort Worth Records Center has been eliminated, and the staff of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission is down from 23 to 8.

The hearing opened with two of the most well-known users of the archives: Alex Haley and Barbara Tuchman. Tuchman compared the budget cuts to "the burning of the Library of Alexandria in the 3d century B.C." The General Accounting Office witness summed up GAO's recent evaluation of NARS' preservation activities: "The patient is alive but the vital signs are weak, and the prognosis is guarded at best." Archivist Robert Warner, walking a delicate line between support of the administration and responsiveness to the subcommittee, admitted that many functions were being reduced or postponed. GSA administrator Gerald Carmen announced that charges for NARS facilities would be adjusted downward by \$5 million, which would "eliminate the need for significant furloughs of archives staff."

A Society of American Archivists representative testified that attempts were being made to replace the current archivist, despite the fact that the position has never been considered a political appointment. Several interested organizations urged consideration of legislation making NARS an independent agency, such as S.1421 which is pending in the Senate. Arguments given for independence included a previous GSA administrator's attempts to disperse records to regional centers, a current GSA-imposed reorganization which would move the records management function out of NARS, and the inability of the archivist to defend his budget directly to the Office of Management and Budget or to Congress. Over the last five years NARS' staff has decreased by 1%, while reference requests increased by 80%. GSA is one of the few agencies which has not appealed the 16% cut to Congress.

ALA is filing a statement for the hearing record with emphasis on the elimination of the interlibrary loan service, maintenance of the archival government publications collection transferred to NARS from GPO, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission whose grant programs need re-authorization.

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