

[Nov Dec. 1955]

*Frank Horne*

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASE OF  
MRS. CORIENNE R. MORROW

A few days after Dr. Frank S. Horne and Mrs. Corienne R. Morrow were issued reduction-in-force notices, July 25, in the Office of the Administrator, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Charles E. Slusser, Commissioner of the Public Housing Administration, telephoned Dr. Horne. Mr. Slusser said that he had heard about the notices and was interested in having experienced racial relations personnel in PHA. He then asked Dr. Horne if he would be interested in the position of Racial Relations Officer, for the region embracing New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the New England states. This position was being vacated by the resignation of Edward Rutledge. After Dr. Horne indicated that he would not be interested, Mr. Slusser asked if Mrs. Morrow would be. Dr. Horne agreed to find out and follow-up on this proposal.

Accordingly, the position was discussed later by both Dr. Horne and Mrs. Morrow with Philip Sadler, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, in charge of the Racial Relations Branch, PHA. In these discussions, Mr. Sadler referred to Mrs. Morrow as the most desirable potential recruit for the position and commended her cooperation with him after his appointment which followed her detail to PHA for eight months as Acting Director of the Racial Relations Branch. In this position, she was responsible for coordination and professional supervision of all field Racial Relations officers in addition to services within the central office of PHA to the Commissioner and principal staff. It was apparent that both Mr. Slusser and Mr. Sadler had been favorably impressed with the quality of Mrs. Morrow's performance and continued cooperation with the Racial Relations Branch in PHA.

Mr. Sadler, in conversations with Dr. Horne and Mrs. Morrow agreed that the position would not be filled until after the Civil Service Commission handed down a decision in the Morrow case. He stated that the position would then be made available to Mrs. Morrow if she wanted it.

On the basis of these understandings, Mrs. Morrow returned to New York, resuming her residence at 64 Prospect Place, Brooklyn.

On October 31, the Civil Service Commission handed down a decision over the signature of E. A. Dunton, Chief Appeals Examining Office, concluding:

"In the light of the foregoing analysis, it is our determination that Mrs. Morrow's separation by reduction in force on August 25, 1955, was in contravention of the Retention Preference Regulations. It is therefore recommended that she be restored to duty in the position of Information Specialist, GS-13, or to some other position at that level and that such restoration be retroactive to August 26, 1955, the date following her separation by reduction in force."

Mrs. Morrow reported to the Personnel Office of the Office of the Administrator on November 15. Interviewed by Frederick Arend, substituting for Douglas Chaffin, Personnel Director. She was immediately told that the position of Information Specialist which the Civil Service Commission ruled upon had been vacated by the resignation of the incumbent, Joseph Rainey. The position had been abolished. About two weeks before Mrs. Morrow's decision was released Mr. Rainey's resignation had been published with the explanation that he was returning to a post with the National Republican Committee.

Mrs. Morrow was told that no temporary assignments could be found for her, although the Personnel Division had considered even typist jobs. She was handed a general reduction in force notice and told to go on annual leave. Mr. Arend told her to remain on duty, using a desk in the personnel office, for the rest of that day since he had been advised by E. A. Dunton of the Civil Service Commission that this would assure the validity of the "restoration". She was given access to the employment records to examine positions she might claim under her reduction in force rights, but was told there was no need for her to examine vacancies because employees in reduction in force status have no "rights" to these. She questioned the meaning of this in the light of a previous statement to the effect that the Personnel Office was looking for a position for which she was qualified.

Mrs. Morrow asked about the availability of positions set up for Racial Relations Advisors in the Regional Administrators' offices. She was told that they had been cancelled.

Mrs. Morrow asked if the Personnel Office, in consonance with its policy of helping reduction in force employees find placement in other constituent administrations of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, would issue a "release" specifically to the Public Housing Administration. Mr. Arend said he would find out and let her know later. In response to this request, Mrs. Morrow was sent a release, dated November 17, addressed TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, which read as follows:

"Mrs. Corienne R. Morrow has received a general reduction in force notice. The Housing and Home Finance Agency has no objection to her immediate release should she be offered a position in another agency."

The notification of personnel action (Standard Form 50), which Mr. Arend said was not ready when requested by Mrs. Morrow on November 15, was dated November 14 and mailed to her by the Personnel Director on November 17. The action was described as "Reduction in Force - CANCELLATION" from the position of Racial Relations Adviser, GS-1-1-13, \$10,065.00 per annum, Racial Relations Staff, Washington, D. C., and the remarks stated "Retroactive restoration as a result of corrective action recommended by the Civil Service Commission. Active duty begins November 15, 1955." The section in this form designating position to which assignment was made was not completed.

In follow-up on the agreement between Mrs. Morrow and Mr. Sadler that she would immediately seek to effect transfer to the Public Housing Administration after restoration to duty in the Office of the Administrator, Mrs. Morrow advised him of her technical availability under the reduction in force notice status. In a previous conference, Mr. Sadler determined by telephone discussion with Mr. Stern, Director of Personnel for PHA, that the request for Mrs. Morrow's appointment or transfer would have to be initiated by PHA. Mr. Sadler stated that he would immediately pursue the details.

November 21, Mr. Sadler informed Mrs. Morrow by telephone that he had learned the position would not be available to her.

WHEN MRS. MORROW RETURNED TO THE AGENCY ON NOVEMBER 15 TO BE REINSTATED TO THE POSITION "INFORMATION SPECIALIST" GRADE GS-13 (\$10,065) AS RULED BY THE COMMISSION, SHE WAS TOLD THE JOB WAS ABOLISHED (IT HAD BEEN OCCUPIED BY JOSEPH RAINEY FROM THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, WHO THE WEEK BEFORE RETURNED TO THE COMMITTEE) AND WAS HANDED A GENERAL REDUCTION IN FORCE NOTICE EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 16.

ON DECEMBER 7, MRS. MORROW RECEIVED A SPECIFIC REDUCTION IN FORCE NOTICE, WITH THE OFFER OF A POSITION AS SECRETARY-STENOGRAPHER, GRADE GS-6 (\$4890 PER YEAR).

(Copy of general reduction in force notice attached.)

December 7, 1955