THOMPSON ADDS NOTHING NEW TO SLUSH INQUIRY

Senator Refuses to Give Up Information He "May or May Not Have."

PROBE MAY BE DROPPED

Council for Burke Fails to Pin Witness—Last Public Hearing Held.

Unless further information deemed worthy of investigation comes to it from a little yellow dress suit case or a battered trunk belonging to Senator George F. Thompson or from some other unsuspected source, the Senate Judiciary Committee held its last public hearing yesterday in its search for "slush" funds. Aside from the three times when, in the opinion of the Senator, he had been improperly approached on behalf of pending investigation, as told by him on Wednesday, he would offer nothing yesterday which he thought should be brought out in open session without previous investigation. It has not been developed that any Senator saw so much as the glitter of a new dime.

It is the general impression that the inquiry will not be pressed further, although Senator Thompson, at the request of the committee, is to give a mass of information in his possession, most of which he frankly acknowledges is probably worthless, but some of which he says might develop something improper if properly investigated. Even this might be properly explained, he said.

The Senator insisted, upon cross-examination, that he believed former Gov. Whitman was lobbying in the full sense of that word at the St. Regis luncheon conference that has been many times referred to.

Suitcase an Attraction.

As the Senator sat on the stand in the Board of Estimate room in the City Hall yesterday he had the mysterious little yellow case before him. He ran casually through its contents, consisting of documents, legislative bills, drafts, letters, telegrams and notes. It was gathered that some of the things he believes might be investigated came to him in the form of annonymous communications, which as a class, Frank Moss, his counsel, remarked, frequently produce facts of the greatest importance, properly followed up. All these matters are to be turned over to the committee as soon as Mr. Moss can arrange them, with suggestions for further inquiry.

Jerome L. Cheney, Deputy Attorney-General, counsel for the committee and members of that body, sharply quizzed Senator Thompson in an evident attempt to get him to say that he had given to them every fact in his possession which he thought might show anything improper in the way of influencing legislation. He refused to acknowledge this, saying he had other things that might or might not be of value, but that none of them was in such shape that he cared to bring it out at this time.

One thing that he drew casually from his bag was a copy of a letter signed by well known hotel men here, which was said to have been sent by them to all saloonkeepers in the State. It stated that the hotel men had a scheme for fighting prohibition and were putting up 5 per cent. of their gross receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages in 1918, and asking the saloonkeepers to send 2 per cent. of their receipts to the fund. Senator Thompson said if he were conducting the inquiry he would get one of the subscribers, find out who he paid the money to and then learn what was done with it.

It was brought out that the letter was dated February 27, while the prohibition amendment was passed in the Legislature in January, and members of the committee could not see how any of the fund could have been used in Albany.

An attempt, which failed, was made to get the Senator to admit that he did not take much stock in the stories of Burke, did not regard the suggestions of former Gov. Whitman seriously and that he gave out the stories about "slush" and "dough bags" solely for the purpose of defeating the Carson-Martin bill. He would not have taken the Burke story seriously, he declared, if it had not been followed by the suggestions from Mr. Whitman that he vote for the bill. He insisted that Mr. Burke had told him he was on the payroll of the gas companies, although, as the record showed, he did not know whom Burke represented.

A dispute developed when Clark Jordan, counsel for Burke, tried to get Thompson to acknowledge he had used the long distance telephone to communicate with two women and had furnished them with rooms at the Biltmore, all at the expense of the State. The names of the women were stated, and went into the record despite the objections of the Senator. They could do anything to him, he said, but he did not think it fair to attempt to cast slurs on two perfectly respectable women. He knew both, but denied that they had ever stopped at the Biltmore.

Schuyler Beattie of Lockport, who acted as a confidential man for Senator Thompson during a part of the Public Service investigations, testified that Burke tried to get from him all the information he could about the financial condition, habits and hobbies of the Senator. He was solicitous about his health and thought he ought to have long vacations. Burke told him, Mr. Beattie said, that he was connected with Mr. Brady.

"Did you take Burke seriously when he offered the $500,000 slush fund in support of your candidacy for Governor?" asked Senator Burlingame.

"Well, yes, he meant it," was the reply. "I was satisfied of that, but what I meant to convey to you is that Burke had no influence on me at all, none whatever. There was no danger with me, or I don't believe with any Senator, that Burke could say anything to me.

The Chairman: "You did not think much of Burke's offer when he made it, did you?"

"Well, I would not—it would not tempt me."

"Didn't you think it was a good deal of a hoax?"

"No, I did not. He tried everything in the world, I guess, to find out what I wanted. There seemed to be everything tried that I wanted; and there are some disordered minds that think a man in the Senate must want something, and if it was not one thing it must be another; and having tried everything else, why, it must be Governor. He found out that was another thing that I did not want. That is all; that is, what got to me.

"From your mental state, the matter got much more serious, didn't it, after you saw the Governor?"

"Yes, much more serious."

"And you coupled that with the Burke incident?"

"Yes, that is true.

Burlingame Takes a Hand.

After Mr. Jordan had finished his examination of Senator Thompson he was taken in hand by Chairman Burlingame and other members of the committee in an effort to prove out of his own mouth that he did not lay much store by the talks with Burke and former Gov. Whitman until he saw the chance for a sensational story.

"Senator, the seriousness of it, in your mind, was the usage of it as a basis for a story, the ultimate effect of which you hoped would be to beat this bill to which you were so opposed?"

Hid Idea of a Bribe Offer.

"Oh, I think the bill was beaten then, but I thought there was a good deal of danger if Mr. Whitman and Mr. Burke were going to organize together and got at it the way they started for me."

"When you left the St. Regis Hotel, where you had luncheon with Gov. Whitman, did you deem that you had been offered a bribe?"

"Within the meaning of the Penal Code?"

"Oh, no, in any sense, that there was a lobby, or that there was an effort to bribe you?"

"I thought that he was lobbying in the full meaning of the term."

"Were you much incensed over it?"

"I did not like it, and I got crosser over it the more I though of it."

"Well, you parted as friends when you left him after luncheon, didn't you?"

"Oh, I guess we were just as friendly then as we ever were."

"And you did not take this bribe situation as serious, did you, until some time after?"

"No, I took it serious then. I do not like to have you say a bribe situation. It was an improper practice, no question about that."

"Well, now, Senator, tell the committee, is there any other source of information you know of that will enable us to get any closer to this situation of lobbying whereby you were offered $500,000 slush fund to run for Governor as the result of your proposed vote—change of vote?"

"I would not say they offered me a $500,000 slush fund, I have been told by those in position to know that it costs upward of that sum to run for Governor and make a campaign in the primaries and another one in the election; but I don't suppose that it is used as a slush fund."

"Well, I know; but is there any added information that you can give us to aid the committee in accomplishing the object for which the committee was appointed?"

"Why, I have got a lot of stuff here. I will make you a statement, try to, this afternoon, in relation to anything, if there is anything; I don't know that there is."

Hints at Other Things.

"I think you will agree with us," pressed the chairman, "that we have followed, as far as we can, the purpose for which the committee was organized, and that you have no further information that you can give us at this time?"

"What difference does it make whether we agree," replied the Senator. "I have some other things here that seem as though they ought to be called to your attention."

Senator Black asked whether Mr. Thompson took the Burke proposition seriously after a "similar proposition" had been made to him by Mr. Whitman.

"There wasn't any danger in Burke talking to me at all," was the reply, "but the other one was more dangerous."

"Now, Senator," broke in Mr. Cheney, "will you tell us when a similar proposition was made by Gov. Whitman?"

"Well, the question of similarity is not. Mr. Attorney-General, hardly for me to decide. I have tried my best to give you the details."

"Just answer my question, Senator, and we will get along all right. When you answered Senator Black did you have in mind a conversation with Gov. Whitman at the St. Regis and nothing else?"

"Yes."

"Nothing else?"

"No."

Asked to try and be specific in stating what further information he might possess, Senator Thompson said:

"Well, I don't know about information. There is a lot of information in there (indicating the suitcase); you can have it. There is some more there (indicating portfolio), and then there is a trunkful of letters and telegrams and stuff. What it might relate to I do not know. I decline to foreclose myself now on any information I might find in my possession. I don't call to mind at this particular instant anything that would be of value to you, to say it to you here from the witness stand. If I did I would tell you, and there is not anything that has occurred that I won't tell you all about, and go down the line as far as you will go, or your committee will go, any time, and as long as you have the authority, and after that, if you want to take it and try it."

"The committee wants to go down the line with you, if you will give us something to follow," said Senator Burlingame.

"Well, I wish the committee would take the lead and let me follow," was the answer.

"If you will show us the light we will lead and you can follow."

"I don't want to have to do all the work. You see, I am not a member of this committee. I do not think it is right for you people here to try to put the burden of this whole thing on me. I am giving you information and I am glad to see you welcome it. Now go to somebody else and get some of theirs. You cannot have a picnic all alone; you must have others to it."

Not Holding Out, He Says.

"Well, what are you holding out, Senator?"

"I am not holding out anything, I am not going to hold out anything. I am a witness here on the stand and I am willing to give you any information or answer any question they can ask. I decline to take the responsibility for this investigation of your committee. I decline to take the responsibility of when it shall stop, and I decline to say that I have not any further information in relation to any other subject, because I may and I may not have. I don't know. I decline to say whether I have got any further information in relation to this subject because it may be pertinent and it may not. But I am going to give it to you, I am going to show it to you and tell you what I know about it."

"Won't you make an exception and tell us whether you have anything more on Burke?" asked Mr. Jordan, his counsel.

"I cannot be any nicer to you than I have been to the Attorney-General," replied the Senator with a smile.

Counsel for the committee and for Mr. Burke having failed to pry anything further out of Senator Thompson, Chairman Burlingame turned to counsel for him and said:

"May I inquire, Mr. Moss, whether there is anything in your knowledge—anything further that will give us any assistance with respect to this investigation or the purpose for which the investigation was started, namely and chiefly, to the extent of finding a lobby of $500,000 to further the candidacy of Senator Thompson for Governor?"

"Not at the present time, but if anything comes I will give it to you. I did not understand, Mr. Chairman, that this investigation ran to an established lobby fund. Perhaps my notion of it is different from that of others, but it seems to me the evidence tended to show a potential fund, a fund that would be subscribed. Not that there was $500,000 in any place, collected and put down for distribution, but it seems to me the evidence has shown that there was a willingness to contribute that fund, a willingness to deposit it providing the Senator had been receptive of it. If there was such a fund, and I get any evidence of it, I will be glad to submit it to you."

"Now, Mr. Jordan," said Chairman Burlingame, addressing himself to Mr. Burke's counsel, "have you any information along the same line?"

"The information I have I am free to confess," replied Mr. Jordan with a smile that he made no attempt to conceal, "is that there was not any, and that Senator Thompson did not get a dollar."

In his cross-examination Mr. Jordan tried to make Senator Thompson admit that he had received a great deal of assistance from Burke; that he had among other things served subpœnas on him, and had been asked to find George W. Young of the Windsor Trust Company, who was in Palm Beach when the Public Service Committee wanted him.

Counsel tried to get into the record an intimation that Senator Thompson was on good terms with Nicholas F. Brady and deliberately did not go into the gas and electric interests in the investigation as thoroughly as he did into the traction matters.

"Were there some other interests that were entirely ignored?" asked Mr. Jordan.

"We did not ignore anybody," was the reply. "We continued the inquiry all we could after we lost the power of subpœna."

When Mr. Jordan started to press Senator Thompson as to the motives that led him to give out his "slush" fund story without first asking for an investigation by the Senate, this testimony was taken:

Q. "Did you have in mind that if you published that it might keep some of your associates in line?" A. "No."

Q. "You didn't think that unless you made it public some one else was liable to be bribed and you would preserve them from that calamity, did you?" A. "Well, I might have felt that probably it would be a good thing for the public to prevent some people from using on others what they attempted to use on me."

Q. "You felt that, whereas you were strong enough to resist, there might be some weak brothers?" A. "It is not easy even to resist it. No, I thought they were strong enough to resist."

Q. "You mean to say it was a temptation to you? You say it was hard to resist?" A. "No, there never was any temptation as far as I was concerned to vote for this bill. The minute any one spoke of this bill to me in the past two months I waded into them with an argument."

Q. "You said it was hard to resist?" A. "It is not easy for any man to be invited to a wonderful hotel and be given a sort of attempt at hospitality and be given a good lunch, a good visit and all that sort of thing; it is not easy to say what you have got to say, that you can't do it. I hate to tell anybody 'No.' I don't know how it is with other people, but I always hate to refuse a man."

Q. "Well then, you did not do it for the purpose of preserving some of your colleagues from the same temptation that you went through with, for fear they would not have the same stamina as you?" A. "I talked to one of my colleagues. I talked about this bill, and I said, 'What do you think about it?' And he said, 'I might consider jumping off the Woolworth Building, but I would not consider voting for this bill.' I don't think anybody would have tempted him. I think his mind was made up all right, but even at that he would not be pleased with an opportunity to refuse the pleadings of an ex-Governor of the State, I don't believe; I don't know."

Denies Any Shonts Offer.

Senator Thompson denied that Theodore P. Shonts, president of the Interborough had ever offered him financial assistance directly or indirectly. As for the story about $15,000 church funds, he said he had collected $1,100 for a church in condemnation proceedings and paid it out the day after he got it. A home newspaper had printed some sort of a yarn to hurt him politically and it had been forced to apologize.

Arguing in favor of getting his questions about the Hotel Biltmore bills Mr. Jordan said he wanted to attack the credibility of the witness.

"He has made a long statement," the lawyer said. "It reads like a romance. It is a beauty, and I think there are few people who could beat it. I cannot say it is not true, but wherever he charges wrong against any person that person says it is not true."

Senator Thompson indignantly replied that he would give him all the facts, but he resented bringing in the names of perfectly respectable women.

Senator Black suggested that as Mr. Whitman had asked to be protected by counsel, the privilege of cross-examining Senator Thompson be granted. No one was in the room to represent Mr. Whitman and Senator Burlingame said he believed word would have been sent to him if the former Governor had wished to cross-examine. The committee then adjourned, subject to the call of the chair.

LEFT NET ESTATE OF $598,310.

Appraisal of Mrs. Elizabeth Laidlaw's Holdings Filed.

Mrs. Elizabeth Carter Onderdonk Laidlaw, who died at 79 in her city home, 24 West Seventy-fourth street, in October, 1917, left a total estate of $628,019 and a net estate of $598,310, according to the appraisal filed yesterday in the Surrogates' Court.

Assets of the estate consist of the country home, Kelso Place, at Sands Point, L. I., surrounded by ten acres of land and valued at $40,000; personal property appraised at $21,472, and stocks and bonds valued at $366,763. Among the larger holdings are 232 shares of the Bank of California, $21,472; 2,254 shares of St. Joseph Lead Company, $38,318; 396 shares Rochester Cold Storage Company, $52,074.

The estate is divided among the sons and daughters of the deceased, as follows: Elliott C. R. Laidlaw, Plainfield, N. J.; James Lees Laidlaw, 26 Broadway; Robert R. Laidlaw, same address; Mrs. Jesse L. Williams, 152 West Fifty-seventh street; Mrs. John C. Vaughn, 156 West Seventy-ninth street, and Mrs. Edward Roesler, Sands Point, L. I., $84,462 each, and Mrs. Inlay Benet, Lake Mahopac, N. Y., $89,535. The executors are her sons, James L. and Robert R. Laidlaw.

Europe, Band Leader, Left $1,000.

Application for letters of administration to the property left by Lieut. James Rees Europe, leader of the jazz band of Col. Hayward's negro regiment in France, who was killed by one of his bandsmen in Boston last week, was filed in the Surrogate's court yesterday by the band leader's widow. Europe died intestate, according to the petition, leaving property worth approximately $1,000.

PLANTS GUN TO NAB HUSBAND.

Fireman's Wife, Though, in Tears Confesses at Hearing.

Lieut. James Shaw of Hook and Ladder No. 3, East Thirteenth street, had a spat with his wife on April 15 that resulted in Shaw's arrest for violation of the Sullivan law. As the bout waxed warm in their apartments, 1864 Holland avenue, The Bronx, Mrs. Shaw ran from the house and called a patrolman.

"Don't go in there, my husband might shoot you," she said.

The policeman went in and Mrs. Shaw, following, pointed to a revolver on a shelf with five cartridges near it. The weapon was not loaded. In Bronx Special Sessions yesterday Shaw was acquitted, proving that he had no guilty knowledge of the weapon being in the house. Mrs. Shaw thereupon broke down and sobbed, saying she had trumped up the whole business. It looked as though a reconciliation would be effected.

Three Missing After Ship Burns.

WASHINGTON, May 15.—An official despatch to the State Department today reporting the burning of the City of Mobile said De Witt Harp and R. Ford Thompson, Americans, and Carl Peterson, a Dane, were reported missing and probably dead. They signed with the barkentine at Jacksonville, Fla.

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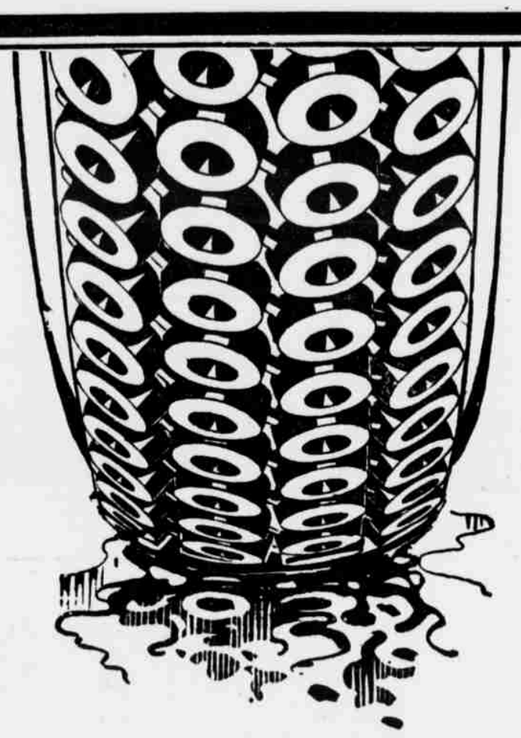

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31 x 4	33.35		4.70
32 x 4	33.95	48.70	4.75
33 x 4	35.85	50 05	4.90
34 x 4	36.50	51 35	5.05
32 x 4½	47.20	54.90	6.10
33 x 4½	49.10	56.35	6.20
34 x 4½	49.50	57.85	6.30
35 x 4½	51.50	59.20	6.35
36 x 4½	52.05	60.70	6.50
33 x 5	60.30	68.55	7.25
35 x 5	63.45	71.90	7.60
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