

TILLMAN BLAMES SUPREME COURT

SAYS IT HAS TRIED TO SHIRK DISPENSARY ISSUE.

Also After Board of Control—Chief Trouble Lies With That Body, He Says—Expects Legislature to Handle Whole Matter.

Senator Tillman was in Augusta on Thursday afternoon for a few hours, on his way home from Washington for the Christmas holidays, and to a reporter for The Augusta Herald he made some interesting observations on the dispensary situation in South Carolina. Senator Tillman's expressions were made before the Supreme Court had given its decision in the Farnum case, which establishes the authority of the investigating commission to compel the testimony from unwilling witnesses. In this ruling the court finds contrary to Tillman's views.

The Herald reports the interview with Senator Tillman as follows:

Senator Tillman was asked as to the dispensary situation in South Carolina and he said that in his opinion the recent voting out of the dispensary in the various counties was but an expression of the people of dissatisfaction with the present board of directors of that institution.

"Senator, what do you think of the recent actions by the Supreme Court of South Carolina?" asked the reporter.

"In my opinion the Supreme Court is endeavoring to shirk the duty imposed upon it by law. They have tried every means to avoid the issue and the people have the right to demand that these questions be settled at once."

"What do you think of the investigating commission?"

"The commission started right and as yet, have only scratched the surface of the rottenness of the dispensary, and if they had been empowered by the legislature or authorized by the courts to imprison witnesses for contempt, no doubt they would have accomplished much."

"But as it now is the commission is, under the concurrent resolution passed by the legislature, powerless to compel the witnesses to testify, and, while I doubt very much if the commission can legally do so, the Supreme Court ought to decide the point. If the court will say that the commission has the right to rule witnesses in contempt then they can accomplish much."

"This point should be decided by the court without further delay, for the court now has the entire confidence of the people, but if they shirk their duty this time, their usefulness to a large extent will be at an end."

Senator Tillman here went on to say that the action of the court in dodging the issue will have the effect of ending the work of the investigating commission, for the legislature meets on the ninth of January and at the present time the court would not have decided the question by that time. The senator said that the commission had done good work and if it had not been hampered by the defective resolution it would undoubtedly have been able to show to the legislature at the next session something that would have enabled the legislature to take some decisive action.

"I can not understand," said the senator, "how the lawyers in the legislature could have permitted such a resolution to pass. It was only a concurrent resolution and

did not receive the signature of the governor, and I do not think that the commission thus created can rule a witness in contempt. But at present the commission is bound and unless the court grants the power sought by it the members will only have scratched the rottenness."

"What do you think of the recent voting out of the dispensary in the various counties and especially in Edgefield, your home county?" asked the reporter.

"Well to start with, the Brice law only allows about one-third of the people to vote and I take the voting out of the dispensary by these counties as a protest against the manner in which the present board of directors conduct the business."

"What about the board of control now in office?"

"I understand that at the next

meeting of the legislature the present members will stand for reelection, using this as a means to get vindication from the charges that have been so sweepingly made. If they do stand all that I am going to do is watch and see the men who vote for them. Then I can tell the honest men in the legislature from the dishonest ones."

From the senator's manner at this juncture it was easily seen that the present board would not get his vote if he were in the legislature.

Senator Tillman said that in his mind there is no doubt that the legislature will at its next session discuss the dispensary matter thoroughly, and but for the commission being practically powerless, the legislature would undoubtedly had some definite information to work upon.



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