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Senate May Rebuke Harding For Tolbert Appointment

(By William E. Grigham, Regular Cor-
respondent of The Boston Tran-
script.)

Washington, Aug. 19.—The senate appears ready to administer a sharp rebuke to President Harding for unfit appointments to public office. The president's readiness to listen to political boomers and to play the game of the republican machine has led into a great many unfortunate situations. The National Civil Service Reform League, in its recent report on the diplomatic service, surprised the country by glossing over a good many things and giving the president a clean bill of health, whereas it is notorious that Mr. Harding has regarded the Latin American posts as rewards for political service and in many instances has acted accordingly. The unfortunate effect has been observable, however, more in Latin American than in American public opinion, for our friends to the south are exceedingly sensitive over the tendency among American presidents to use political service in this country as an excuse for sending to them men with no knowledge of their language, customs or method of thought. It is only fair to say, however, that most of the appointees, with one glaring exception, have been men of high personal character and to Chile, Brazil and Colombia the president has sent men of conspicuous ability.

The senate now, with a little more leisure, appears determined to scan the nominations with unusual care; and in the case of that of Joseph W. Tolbert to be United States marshal for the western district of South Carolina it bids fair to support Senator Dial of that state in his fight to have the nomination rejected. Tolbert is the member of the republican national committee for that state and it is understood that his appointment was recommended by the headquarters of that organization. Consequently the flight that is being made to secure withdrawal of the nomination or rejection of the nominee is one calling for a line-up of the republicans in the senate against their own party organization. Tolbert is the republican "referee" for South Carolina; a word coined in the time of Roosevelt when that president, distracted by the pulling and hauling of corrupt Southern republicans for appointments to office, selected what he believed to be the squarest men he could find to pass upon Southern patronage. The scheme worked fairly well, although of course it caused its heartburnings, and Mr. Harding has adopted it.

His selection of Tolbert in South Carolina appears to have been particularly unfortunate; so much so that Senator Dial has felt constrained to lay before the senate the personal record of the referee and candidate, backed with affidavits, and these are now being studied by a subcommittee of the committee on the judiciary consisting of Senators Shortridge, of California; Ernst of Kentucky, and Ashurst of Arizona. In addition, Senator Dial placed in the Congressional record the story of Tolbert's operations as chief distributor of patronage for his state, with the result that the nomination has been held up and, unless Mr. Tolbert can clear himself of the charges brought against him, the full committee bids fair to recommend rejection for the good of the republican party.

Once before, at the instance of Senator Dial, the senate has rejected one of President Harding's appointees in South Carolina, a fact which encourages the belief that it will follow its hand in the Tolbert case. It appears that in Orangeburg county Tolbert appointed as a sub-referee for that district one B. J. Mixson. The term of the lady postmistress in the town of Bowman was expiring, and she informed Senator Dial that Mixson had demanded \$300 of her as the price of her reappointment. She refused to pay the money and communicated with the junior senator. Meantime Mixson had been nominated to be postmaster at Orangeburg, and so violent was the opposition to his confirmation that the postoffice department sent two inspectors into the state to investigate the case. They reported back that it was true that Mixson had made this demand of the postmistress, but suggested in their report that as he was likely soon to receive a federal office himself, and therefore go on the federal salary list, no doubt there would be no repetition of the offense. The senate was not impressed by this line of argument, however, and refused to confirm Mixson's nomination.

According to the statement of Senator Dial, as published in The Congressional Record, office brokerage is part of the Tolbert system. Says the senator upon this point: "The proof presented to me is unquestionable on the subject. The practice is to divide the state into districts and have some one in each district look after this part

of the nefarious business. I am told of many instances where the offices were sold—one bringing \$750, another \$1,200, another \$600, another \$2,000 and different sums, all around the state where there was competition. A recent case was reported where \$1,200 was paid an d tie party failed to get the office and after considerable wrangling the funds were returned.

One of Tolbert's referees was recently rejected by the senate because he endeavored to get a lady postmistress to pay him \$300 to get her confirmed. An affidavit of one of his former followers states Tolbert admitted he expected to realize \$100,000 from this source." The senator also has submitted to the sub-committee an affidavit from the mayor of Tolbert's town charging drunkenness, carrying concealed weapons, the possession of a barrel of liquor on the plea that the owner was a government official and therefore entitled to hold it.

Another charge relates to alleged favoritism and discrimination against world war veterans in civil service appointments. Upon this point Senator Dial says: "Mr. Tolbert's conduct since he has been appointed 'referee' has shown him to be a spoilsman of the worst class. For instance, under the practice of this administration in selecting postmasters, the civil service commission sends to the postoffice department the three names making the highest marks, and this department delegates to Tolbert, the referee, the right to select whichever he chooses. . . . Tolbert has ruthlessly ignored the spirit of the civil service and has refused to recommend parties making the highest mark, except in very few cases. He has almost universally ignored the claims of ladies and ex-service men."

Mr. Tolbert has issued a general denial of the charges against him with reference to postmaster appointments, but Senator Dial has submitted to the sub-committee specific examples of alleged favoritism. For instance, in Greenville two ex-soldiers and one civilian competed for the postmastership. William F. Robertson made 79 per cent plus five for soldier preference; Charles C. Withington made 67.4 per cent plus 5 per cent for soldier preference, and Robert T. Thorne made 72.80 per cent. Tolbert endorsed Thorne. In Abbeville Tolbert named his nephew over a veteran with a higher rating. In Clinton he named a nephew by marriage over a veteran, but in this case the nephew had the highest rating of the three. In Kershaw he named his own favorite over a veteran who had the highest rating of the three even without the five per cent soldier preference. These are concrete instances, Mr. Tolbert meets them with the general denial that he has refused to acknowledge preference to soldiers on the civil service list, and he says he has the records to prove it. Already Mr. Tolbert says he has recommended about 300 postmasters for South Carolina. With regard to the case of the Bowman postmistress, Tolbert says he has an affidavit from the postmistress that she does not know Mixson and never has been asked by him for money.

This is the nut the committee on judiciary is asked to crack regarding an important presidential appointment in South Carolina. The whole system is rotten and the senate will put its O. K. on it if the nomination of Mr. Tolbert is confirmed. Senators are inclined to believe without question the statement to them of Senator Dial that ordinarily he would not mix in republican rows in South Carolina and that is innumeral to him what republicans are appointed to office, but that the protests coming up from his state are of such a character he cannot ignore them. Senator Dial has laid the facts before the senate in the form of sworn affidavits, and many republican senators are assuring him that although their party can stand for a good deal, it cannot afford to stand for Tolbert.

Historic Dodo.

"As dead as the dodo" is a common expression, but few know what manner of bird the dodo was or what drove it from the face of the earth. The dodo was a large bird, with a huge beak and useless little wings. Portuguese and Dutch sailors found it on the island of Mauritius in the Indian ocean during the Sixteenth century. It was so stupid that the Portuguese named it "doudo," simpleton. Pigs introduced into the island by the Europeans destroyed its eggs and young, and it became extinct in the Seventeenth century.

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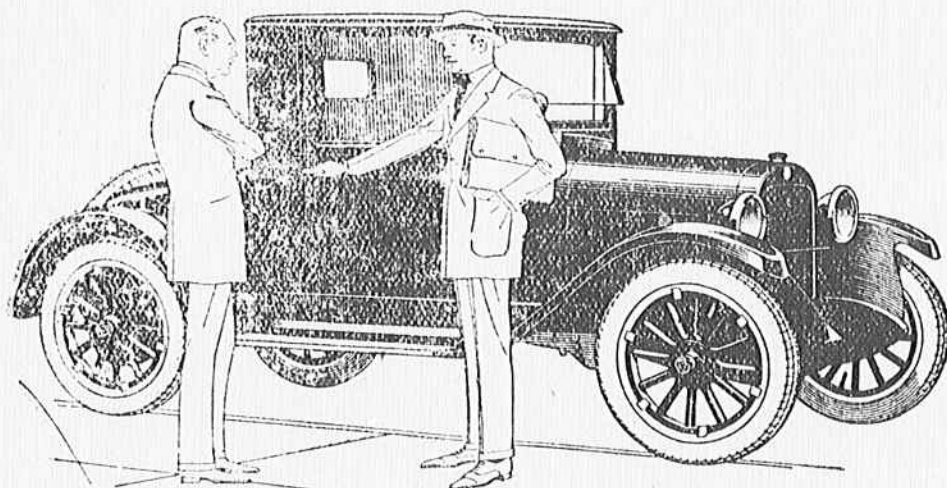
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