

# Graft in the Post Office Department

## A Speech Delivered in the United States Senate, April 11, 1904

By Hon. F. M. Simmons of North Carolina

The Senate having under consideration the bill (H. R. 13521) making appropriations for the service of the post office department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1905, and for other purposes—

Mr. Simmons said: In the speech delivered by the senator from Wisconsin (Mr. Spooner) upon this bill on Saturday last he expressed surprise at the statement made by me to the effect that the investigations of the post office department had been reluctantly entered upon, and from the defense which he immediately thereafter made, of the present postmaster general against that charge, I infer he understood my statement was intended to apply to Postmaster General Payne.

The senator from Wisconsin had read the remarks which I submitted upon the frauds in the post office department in January last he would have seen that I acquitted the present postmaster general of any willful purpose to suppress these investigations and that my charge of reluctance in entering upon these investigations had reference rather to the late postmaster general, Mr. Charles Emory Smith, than to Mr. Payne, the present occupant of that position. Long before Mr. Smith's term of office expired, even in the early days of that term, charges were made; not vague, general charges, but specific charges, made by responsible persons; made by a great independent newspaper published in the city of Washington, and he was challenged to make an investigation of them. He was informed as to the character of the offenses; he was given the names of the witnesses, and yet he went out of office without making any investigation which was worthy of the name of an investigation.

In support of these statements, Mr. President, I then incorporated in the Record an article from the Washington Post, dated May 28, 1900, which contained under the head of "Instances of Improper Payment," the specific charges of irregularities and frauds alleged to have been committed in the Washington City post office and in the post office department. I will not again read that article, but will ask that the part of it under the heading referred to may be incorporated in my remarks.

The President pro tempore has there objection to the request of the senator from North Carolina that the part of the article referred to by him be printed in the Record? The chair hears none, and that order is made.

The extract referred to is as follows:

### "INSTANCES OF IMPROPER PAYMENTS."

"Following are some of the allegations that call for inquiry: "Funds of the Washington City post office have been improperly disbursed for over two years, the irregularities for the quarter ending September 30, 1900, amounting to \$20,000 to \$30,000, according to an expert's report to Comptroller Tracewell.

"Numerous favorites have been carried on two and even three pay rolls at the same time at the Washington City post office and at other post offices in the country. Oliver H. Smith, of Indiana, now superintendent in the local service was for about a year simultaneously auditor of local postal stations, laborer, and painter of street letter boxes. He drew three salaries. Nathan B. (7) Baker, of Indiana, succeeded to Mr. Smith's employment.

"Six women have long been carried on the rolls of the city post office as cleaners at \$600 a year, performing no work whatever, and being paid on separate vouchers. Four men were for many months paid at the local post office, apparently to investigate claims of letter carriers, all the positions being sinecures.

"John E. Jones, a newspaper reporter, was carried for many months as physician to the Washington City post office at \$1,700 a year.

"Traveling expenses of department officials who were not on public business, trips for private citizens only nominally connected with the government service, have been paid to the extent of tens of thousands of dollars out of funds strictly belonging to the Washington post office and out of the military postal fund."

Mr. Simmons. In the same article, under the head of "Men who have information," is given the names of the several witnesses whose testimony, it is said, would sustain the truth of these charges. Among those witnesses are the names of Chief Inspector Cochran, A. H. Scott, J. Edwin Wilson, and Thomas W. Gilmer.

In the same article the statement is made that the then postmaster general, Mr. Smith, invited investigation of these charges and that he had declared all departments of the postal service, except the Cuban service, would bear the closest scrutiny, and that he not only invited but was anxious that there should be a thorough and searching investigation. Four days afterwards the Washington Post reprinted that part of its article to which I have just referred and which declared that the postmaster general invited an investigation and was anxious that one should take place, and made this comment:

"This is reprinted in order to correct the Post, to its sorrow, finds that it was mistaken as to the attitude of the postmaster general. His confidence turned on was misplaced. This admission is chronicled with regret—deep regret in announcing that the head of the post office department invited investigation, the Post believed it was

speaking the simple truth. To be forced to a contrary conclusion by the developments or lack of development, since Saturday last, is anything but pleasing to the Post."

On May 1, 1902, the Post published an interview with S. W. Tulloch, author of the "Tulloch charges," being substantially the same charges made in the Post article first quoted, in which Mr. Tulloch, referring to these charges made by him in 1900, said:

"Detailed charges at length were made, the names of competent witnesses were given, and Postmaster General C. Emory Smith was challenged to make an investigation. Those charges were treated as frivolous and civilly dismissed by the officials involved."

Mr. President, as the senator from Colorado (Mr. Teller), who has just preceded me, has so well said, this whole investigation has grown out of the charges made by Mr. Tulloch. Finally, after much delay, an investigation of these charges was entered upon by Mr. Smith, then postmaster general; but as that investigation proceeded, and as the trail became hot, so to speak, and led in the direction of certain prominent politicians in the post office department, the investigation was suddenly called off, and the men who were engaged in making it were either removed from office or notified "not to be too zealous." Here is what Mr. Tulloch, in his interview just quoted, says about the sudden suppression of this investigation:

"Direct personal and political pressure was then brought to bear upon the comptroller—the investigation was stopped just as it was becoming interesting, and the expert having it in charge was removed for a too zealous performance of his duty, presumably as a warning to others."

The expert referred to by Mr. Tulloch as having been dismissed was Mr. Thomas W. Gilmer, a man admitted by Mr. Bristow and the comptroller of the treasury under whom Mr. Gilmer was employed, to be a man of high character and an expert of great efficiency. This faithful official, who was engaged in diligently probing wrongdoing then rampant in the post office department, was removed not because of any failure of duty or incompetency, but upon the charge of having been dismissed by Mr. Perry S. Heath, then first assistant postmaster general, now secretary of the Republican national executive committee, upon the frivolous pretext that he was not as polite as he should have been and conducted his examinations in a way personally offensive.

Not only was Mr. Gilmer, the expert who had been assigned to make this investigation, removed from the position he then held in the post office department, but certain post office inspectors engaged in the investigation were warned, as I stated before, to be careful and not presume too much. Referring to the restraints and limitations put upon these inspectors, Mr. Tulloch, in the same interview, says:

"The post office inspectors (meaning the inspectors engaged in making this investigation), who were fully aware of the existing conditions, were informed that if they presumed too much they would also be removed."

Mr. President, in view of these facts, repeatedly asserted and published and never so far as I am aware disproved, I think I was justified in saying that these investigations, the one then in progress being the beginning of them, were reluctantly entered upon.

I have had some little official association with the present postmaster general, and I regard him highly. I believe he is an honest man, and I acquit him now, as I did in my former speech, of any willful purpose to stifle the investigation of these postal frauds; but I said then, and I say now, that in the early stages of that investigation his public utterances and conduct with respect to some of the witnesses and his treatment of some of the charges were not such as inspired confidence in his zeal in behalf of a thorough, sweeping and unbiased investigation. His treatment of Mr. Tulloch and his charges was especially a surprise and disappointment to the country. When Mr. Tulloch, a man admittedly of high character, admitted of more than ordinary intelligence, who had to his credit twenty-three years of honest and faithful service in the post office department, preferred specific charges of fraud against officials in his department, giving the names of witnesses by whom those charges could be proven, the postmaster general, in the daily hearings which he accorded the newspaper representatives of Washington, not only laughed him and his charges to scorn, but he characterized them as stale slanders, the emanations of a discharged employee inflamed against the department by reason of his removal from office.

There is not a man in the country, Mr. President, so obtuse as not to know that this kind of treatment of a government witness by the head of the department then undergoing investigation was not only calculated to discourage that investigation but was calculated to deter other employees of the department from revealing information in their possession which might be of importance in unearthing and discovering frauds.

Mr. President, in the speech which I delivered here a few days ago on this bill and to which the distinguished senator from Wisconsin (Mr. Spooner) did me the honor to refer frequently in his very brilliant effort in this chamber last Saturday, I ventured to describe the kind of a man I hoped and believed the Democratic party would this year name

as its candidate for the presidency. The senator from Wisconsin, quoting my language, or at least part of it, and applying it to the description to a certain distinguished citizen whose name has been mentioned in connection with this nomination, and intimated, if he did not state, that what I wanted and what the Democratic party wanted was a candidate of neutral character, a man of passive qualities.

Mr. President, in describing the qualities of the candidate who I said I hoped would be nominated by the Democrats, I said a man of calm, judicial temperament. Are those qualities of a neutral character? I said a man of conservative disposition. Is that a neutral character? I said a man of equable and poised mind. Is that a neutral character? Are judicial temperament, conservative disposition, equable and poised mind and character neutral qualities? Are we to understand that in the opinion of the opposition a man possessing such qualities is not in these days a fit man for the presidency? They were qualities good enough for our presidents during the slow-going times of the nineteenth century; qualities good enough for our presidents in the eyes of Washington and Madison and Adams; qualities good enough in the old times when our presidents contented themselves with executing the laws they found them and left the legislature to make the laws, and the courts to interpret them; but qualities, I suppose, according to the views of senators on the other side, that are altogether unsuited for a president in these strenuous, piping, twentieth-century days.

What, according to them, these times I suppose demand for president is, a man of aggression; a man of dash and initiative; a man who, when the laws do not suit him, has the grit to change the laws; a man who, when he wants to treaty with a foreign government and can not get it, has the courage to say that he was about to report the matter to Congress in order to see whether he should proceed, treaty or no treaty, to carry out this policy.

The senator from Wisconsin said that what the Democrats wanted was a candidate who had the people on the one hand, as a trust buster and whom we could hold up to the business interests of the country, on the other hand, as a safe man for their interests. At once a trust buster and a safe man for the business interests of the country—is there any inconsistency in that?

What legitimate business interest in this country will be injured or endangered by the destruction of the illegal trusts? What legitimate business interest in this country will be injured or endangered by the destruction of the illegal trusts? Will not, therefore, a trust buster be also a safe man to the business interests of the country, and, converso, will not a man who will be a safe man for the business interest of the country be a trust buster?

Perhaps the senator meant to charge, though he did not so say, that the Democrats had wanted a candidate whom it could hold up to the people as a trust buster and to the trusts as one who would be friendly to them. If that is what he meant to charge or to intimate, he probably had in mind a spectacle, a sad spectacle, which the country has recently been called upon to witness—the spectacle of a president held up to the people as the original and only genuine trust buster—while his attorney general, his great lord high executioner of trusts, with the assistance of scores of assistants and district attorneys scattered throughout the country at his command, with a special appropriation of \$500,000 for this purpose at his service, with two or three hundred predatory trusts exploiting the people, after two years or more of superhuman efforts to destroy the trusts, has finally succeeded in finding and bringing two of these trusts to trial; and now, lest the balance of them should take fright, is seeking to calm them with the assurance that this administration does not intend to run "amuck" in its trust-busting policy.

Think of it, Mr. President, two trusts in two years; an average of one a year! At this rate the Republican party will, in about three hundred years, have destroyed all the trusts, provided no additional trusts are formed in the meantime.

I repeat that I trust the Democratic party will have the good sense and the wisdom, as I see it, to nominate a man who is the antithesis of the present occupant of the White House and that the people of this country may have an opportunity to say whether they want a president who will execute their will or a president who will bend them to his will.

Mr. President, the senators in these post office discussions have twitted us with alleged disagreements as to issues as well as candidates, and charged that the Democratic party stood for nothing and could not agree upon anything. The Democratic party is more than a hundred years old. During the past forty years of its history it has been out of power thirty-two years, I believe, and yet notwithstanding these repeated defeats in the last two presidential elections nearly one-half of the popular vote of this country was polled for the Democratic candidate for the presidency, for Mr. Bryan did not lose either time by a very large majority upon the popular vote.

If the Democratic party does not represent anything; if it does not stand for anything, for any principles or policies which are fundamental and immutable, any principles and policies which are near and dear to the patriotic heart and aspirations and to the vital welfare of the people of this country, why is it that despite these defeats of the last half century such a large proportion of the people of this country today worship at the shrine of that party?

Mr. President, to say that this great party, which was 50 years old when the Republican party was born and which has survived eight defeats in ten presidential elections, stands for nothing vital in our national life is to impeach the intelligence and patriotism of practically one-half of the people of this country. The truth is, the Democratic party is a great organization and the Republican party is a great organization, both dear to the hearts of millions

of good and patriotic citizens; both of them have a great past; both of them have accomplished great things for this nation and the world, and both will live to accomplish greater things for the nation and for the world in the future.

To charge that the Democratic party has no candidate and no issues, I have only this answer to make at this time: The essential principle of Democracy is that all authority is derived from those who constitute its membership. Its candidates are nominated, its views and position upon questions growing out of current and transient politics are formulated and proclaimed by its conventions and not by leaders, chiefs, or factions in advance of those conventions; but the fundamental principles which underlie this great party—the principles which brought it into existence and which have been to it the breath of life through the mutations of a century—are the same today as in the day of Jefferson, its great founder.

Mr. President, senators on the other side of the chamber show strange anxiety about our disagreements. Have they no discord and divisions in their own ranks? Would it not be well for them to look to conditions in their own household? They are indeed agreed when it comes to making ante-election pledges and in appropriating the people's money, but is there harmony and unity in the ranks of that party upon anything else?

Mr. President, reciprocity is a subject which has excited much discussion in this country in recent years, and in which the people are profoundly interested. It is true it has not played a very conspicuous part in our trade relations with the outside world in the past, but its importance is now conceded, and in the future it will undoubtedly play a great part in influencing and shaping these relations. Now, what is the position of the Republican party today upon this great question?

It is true you say you are for reciprocity, but what kind of reciprocity are you for? Do you stand for the reciprocity of Blaine and McKinley? You know you do not. You know you are not even agreed among yourselves as to what these great luminaries of your party meant by reciprocity. There are now pending before the Senate thirteen reciprocity treaties, negotiated under the direction of Mr. McKinley, granting concessions upon competitive products as well as non-competitive products.

Yet, notwithstanding this fact and the utterances of his great Buffalo speech, we have heard distinguished representatives of the Republican party on the other side of this chamber during this very session of Congress declare that McKinley did not believe in reciprocity in competitive products. Do you stand for the reciprocity of the Dingley Act or do you stand for the reciprocity of the American Protective Tariff League? The Dingley tariff act authorized reciprocity treaties, and purposely put certain schedules unnecessarily high, even from the protective standpoint, so that they might be cut down by reciprocal trade agreements. The senator from Iowa (Mr. Dilliver), in a speech in this chamber not long since, as have many other leading Republicans, bore testimony that such was the purpose and intent of this act and its framers. The American Protective Tariff League, representing the "stand-patters" of your party, deny this and declare such a policy would be anti-Republican and destructive of the basic principles of protection. For which do you stand?

Again, Mr. President, does the Cuba treaty, which reduces the duty on sugar and tobacco, American sugar products, in the interest of the sugar and tobacco of our chief competitor, illustrate the Republican theory of reciprocity, or does the ultimatum of certain leaders of the majority in this body, reported in the Washington Post of today, and which the senator from Colorado has just read to us, to the effect that they will have nothing more to do with reciprocity based on concessions of this country, represent the views of your party on that subject? The Cuban treaty represents the only legislation of the past three years in favor of reciprocity, and in passing that measure you came near "running amuck." You voted for it solidly, but many of you denounced it bitterly. We witnessed the spectacle of one senator on the other side of this chamber lustily denouncing it one day as a betrayal of Republican pledges and principles and meekly voting for it on the next day.

In your platform of 1900 you promised reciprocity. The Cuban treaty is your only performance. If it does not truly represent the reciprocity you promised and claimed to stand for, and there are thousands in your party who say it does not, you have not only broken your pledge, but you have betrayed the confidence of those who relied on that pledge by giving them a reciprocity the opposite of that promised.

It is idle, Mr. President, to deny that the Republican party is at sea upon the subject of reciprocity, and it is equally idle to claim that there is harmony in that party on the subject of tariff revision. One faction of that party favors reduction by reciprocity; another denounces that as anti-Republican. One faction charges that the Dingley tariff shelters the trusts, and for that reason should be reduced; while another faction denies that tariff affords such shelter or that the tariff has anything to do with the trusts. One faction demands reductions upon the broad ground that the schedules are in some instances oppressively high, and unjust to the consumer; another faction declares these schedules ideal and that they must be sacredly maintained.

You think you have crushed out the Iowa idea, so called, in your party, but you have not and you can not. You have not stifled and you can not stifle the demand for tariff reduction which your tariff schedules continue to shelter monopoly—the common enemy of Democratic and Republican consumers alike. The conflict now between the beneficiaries and the victim in your own party of the special privileges and monopolies of this system of inequities, though deferred, was inevitable. The

cry of "stand pat" from those in your own party whom these laws are enriching can not longer silence the demand for a reduction from the consumers in your own party, to whom these laws have all but doubled the cost of living. The slogan of "Let well enough alone," while satisfying the trusts and monopolies which these laws have enabled to "corner" the American markets, shuts the door of hope upon those in your own party who must have enlarged markets and who find themselves condemned by these laws to continental isolation. Between these clashes—

(Continued on Page 15.)

### Sale of Valuable Land

Under and by virtue of a decree of the superior court of Wake county, entered at February term, 1904, in an action therein pending, in which G. Rosenthal and others were plaintiffs and W. D. Johnson was defendant, the undersigned commissioners will, on Monday, the second day of May, 1904, at 12 o'clock noon, at the court house in the city of Raleigh, expose for public sale to the highest bidder, the following described lot or parcel of land: A tract lying in St. Mary's township, Wake county, known as the "Fisher farm," adjoining the lands of W. R. Poole, Thos. Bingham, John Dodd and others, signed commissioners will, on Monday, the second day of May, 1904, at 12 o'clock noon, at the court house in the city of Raleigh, expose for public sale to the highest bidder, the following described lot or parcel of land: A tract lying in St. Mary's township, Wake county, known as the "Fisher farm," adjoining the lands of W. R. Poole, Thos. 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