## THE BALLOT FRAUD

A Plan Concocted by Silas A. Holcomb and His Political Lieutenants to Steal Two Seats on the Supreme Bench.

history of the state of Nebraska is Broken Bow. Simons appeared and rethe story of the infamous recount deal told under oath the story which which was engineered during the leg- had already been made public. The islative session of 1897. The attempt appearance of the ballots and the eviwas made by a crowd made up of state dence of a dozen witnesses from Linofficials and disreputable politicians to coln and from York corroborated the so change the ballots cast by the peo- testimony of the informer, and not a ple that two additional judges of the one of Holcomb's cohorts dared to supreme court could be counted in. come forward to deny the story. The The details of the plan were arranged testimony of the man Simons, in which at the house of Silas A. Holcomb. on he gave the details of the fraud and "A" street in the city of Lincoln. The told of Holcomb's connection with it, purpose was to place on the supreme is given in part below, and will bear bench William Neville, who is now the close reading of thoughtful people: the fusion candidate for congress in the Sixth district, and J. S. Kirkpatrick, the relative and law partner of Governor Holcomb.

According to sworn evidence that is too well fortified and corroborated to be questioned, the plan to deliber- and occupation. ately change the ballots was carefully must have been taken into every secret of the scheme, as the most highhanded proceedings took place in the legislative halls to further the ends of the conspirators.

## RECORD IS OPEN.

The record in this matter can be inspected by everybody. The house and senate journals of 1897 will show the date of the introduction of the first recount bill; they will show how this was railroaded through in order that the conspirators might get at their work; they will show how the seats of the republican members from Douglas county were stolen in order to increase the majority of the party that was behind the scheme; they will show how the courts were defied, and how the work of changing the ballots was begun in star chamber sessions, part of the time at the dead of night, and part of the time in daylight, but behind locked doors in the office of a state official.

When the recount of the ballots was first publicly proposed a delegation composed of G. M. Lambertson, George W. Post and others called upon the governor and urged that the ballots be publicly counted, and that none but the most reputable citizens of the state be selected to do the work. They pledged the moral support of all good citizens in case the business was thus transacted.

But Silas A. Holcomb paid no atthat the men who were to perform the supreme court. work were selected long before the recount law was passed.

BAD CHARACTER OF THE MEN. It is well that the attention of the people be again called to the class of men selected for this work by Silas A. Holcomb. One was a man who had a case he wanted reversed by the su-

The darkest page in the political | and hurriedly took the train for

SIMON'S TESTIMONY.

Edward L. Simons, being duly sworn testified, as follows:

By Mr. Pound: Q .- Mr. Simons state your residence

A-I live in Lincoln, Lancaster counarranged. Members of the legislature ty and a brick-layer by occupation. Q .- How long have you lived there?

> A .- Fifteen years. Q.-You lived here the winter of 1897 when the legislature was in session?

> A .--- Yes, sir. Q .-- Were you employed in any capacity by either of the recount commission about the ballots cast for the constitutional amendment in the election of 1896?

> A .-- I was employed as a guard to watch the ballots in the vault of the secretary of state's office at the time that the legislature took the ballots from the recount commission.

Q .-- You were guard also in the second recount? A .-- I was guard over the ballots

during the intermediate time of the two sessions.

Q .- Prior to the time the second committee was appointed did you have

anything to do with the ballots or any of them? A .- Not in the official capacity.

Q.-Did you in any other? Q.-I did.

Q .- Did you have any special interest in the matter of the result of that

recount ?

A.-I did.

Q .-- State what that was? A .-- I had had a law suit with a party for 150 acres of land and the rent of it for 13 years-200 acres of land and the rent of it for 13 years. Q .- Where was that suit pending at that time?

A .- At this time it had been settled tention to their suggestions. He had by compromise but I was figuring on other plans, and the proof is now plain having the heirs' interest taken to the

> Q .- Did you think that gave you any interest in the result of this recount? A .-- I think it did or would have. Q.-In what way?

A .--- I thought if I would steal the judges in they would help the boy out.

ARRANGED FOR A STEAL. A.-Yes sir. O .- Did you approach any one in Q.-In taking the ballots to and from the secretary's office describe authority or office with reference to the manner in which you did it. this, particularly about the time these A .- The first two nights I had a ballots were to be recounted? large overcoat that I threw over my A .- I spoke with the parties manipushoulders and I had the package under that. Q .- Who did you speak to? Q.-Did you go through the main A .- Mr. Edmisten. hall? Q .- Give his initials? A .- Yes sir. A .-- James H. Edmisten, he was state Q.-Was there any secret way in oil inspector and chairman of the State the way of knocking so the guard would know who it was? Q .- When did you speak about this? A .- Yes sir, we had a private rap. A .- Before the legislature convened. Q .-- Describe what that was? Q.-What did you tell him? A .- Three single raps. A .-- I told him how I was situated Q .- When you gave that rap he opened the door? A .- Yes sir. Q .- How many times did you speak Q .- Did you make any change after the first night? A .- After the legislature convened it. A .- Yes sir. Q .- Describe that. Q .- Did he have an office in the cap-A .- We were getting along to the big packages. I couldn't carry them A .- Yes, sir. under my coat any more and it was Q .- State where it wa ssituated? dangerous to go through the hall with A.-It was situated where General them and we found a way from the Barry's office is now. hall in the basement, into the base-Q.-In pursuance with your talk with ment room under Edmisten's office. which had a place leading to the upstairs. By opening a trap door we A .- There was a bill passed by the could get through into the private legislature for a recount commission office. Q .- Did you carry them through the and the commission was appointed by the governor and when they was apbasement after the first night? pointed that organized the next day A .- Yes sir. and the next night we-AFRAID OF GETTING CAUGHT. Q .- Describe to the committee the Q .- Who were we? reasons that led you to do that. Was A .- That is Edmisten Blake and myself and several other parties. it in fear of any interruption? A .- Well, there was, A person was Q .- That was the night after the commission was appointed and orliable to be caught with the package ganized? in his possession. -Night after the organization. Q.-Was there any sign of interruptions? Q .- Where did you meet? A .- The second night we were there A .- In Edmisten's private office. Mr. Norval was in the hall. Q .- Who procured you to meet Q .- Judge Norval of the Supreme there? court? A .- We knew where to go. A .- Yes sir, he was looking around Q .- Who told you where to go? and we were afraid of being caught. A .-- It was mutually understood His wife was down there to a meetamong all of us. ing of the ladies of some institution Q .- What preparation did you make he was waiting for her and and there? walking up and down the hall and didn't know but somebody was watch-A .-- Why we had a talk and Edmising us. ten went into the secretary of state's Q .- How many nights in all were office and got the first bunch of ballots. you engaged in this matter you de-Q .- The secretary of state's office is scribed? on the same floor?

in each precinct and changed those that | When the legislature meets they genwere opposed to the amendment. Q .- State who was doing the marking?

A .- Blake, Edmisten, myself and another party. ---- IFa Illa a Q.-What preparations for secrecy if any were made? What did you do in the way of preventing intrusion?

A .- Why, we had the outside door that leads from the hallway shut up and the door that leads between the private office and the big room closed and we had the vault door pretty near shut and we put paper over the inwindows so you couldn't see any light in there.

Q.-Was there a light in the outer rooms? Was the gas lighted? A.-No, sir.

Q .- Where did you get the material you used, the ink and so forth?

A .- We used Edmisten's ink, after that there was about four bottles got of black ink.

Q.-After the ballots were marked as you described, what was done with them?

A .- Wrapped up and packed to the secretary's office.

Q .- Would you go back and forwards several times during the evening or only once?

A .--- As soon as we got one bunch ing? finished, we would go and get some more.

Q .- Describe how the ballots were marked?

A .- The blanks were marked for the amendment and those voted against amendment we would put a cross for the amendment at the top and one below.

Q .- That would leave a mark for the amendment and still another for the Supreme Judge creating the impression that the voter had voted for those two and against the others?

A .-- No; the commission had rassed a resolution to give the benefit of all the doubtful votes for the amendment and we would make two crosses for the one as against the other.

Q .-- So the object was to change them so as to create the impression in favor of the amendment?

A.-Yes, sir.

Q.-How long were you engaged in this work?

A .- We worked until about midnight...

Q .- You say the commission passed a resolution to give the benefit of the

doubt in favor of the amendment; how do you know? Were you present? A .--- I wasn't present. I was informed

by the commission. Q.-By the commission themselves?

A.-Yes, sir.

Q.-What number informed you? A.-Blake.

Q.-He was one of the gentlemen present altering the ballots?

A .- Yes sir.

Q.-George W. Blake?

A .--- Yes sir. FIRST NIGHT'S WORK. Q.-Did you have any counties marked the first night?

A.-The first two counties were Blane and Banner. Edmisten carried one and I carried the other.

Q.-When the ballots were marked, how were they returned? A .- They were put back in the en-

velope and the package wrapped up and taken back to the secreary's office. Q .- Restored to their former ap-

pearance as near as possible?

erally use that for an investigating room or to give audience for the committees to work in.

Q.-Were the same parties present each of the four fights that you have mentioned? A.-Yes, they were all there. Q .- Do you know who occupied the

coom where those ballots were kept. Isn't it a fact that Mr. Starrit of the secretary of state's office occupied that room?

A .- No. I wouldn't be positive. He might have had a desk there to work an hour a day or so.

Q.-He was not in there in the day time?

A .- No sir, he had an office at another place.

Q .- The room that I was speaking of. You may state whether or not the same persons were present on all of these occasions.

A .--- Yes sir.

Q .- Take Mr. Edmisten for instance. Was he present the whole length of time? A .-- No, he used to go and open the

door and start the work, and when we started he would leave.

Q .- How long would he stay there? A .- About an hour or so.

Q .-- Did he take part in the mark-

-Yes sir. Α.

Q .- Did you have anything to do judges and one cross opposite the yes with the ballot poxes in any other down below for another amendment. Q.-Was that your usual method? precinct?

A .- The first night we opened the poll books to see how many votes were cast, and we found out it didn't do any good and we didn't have the ballots to mark up and we didn't open the poll books any more.

Q .- Just describe what kind of mark you would make and how?

A .- Well, if the ballot was blank entirely we would just mark opposite the amendment.

Q .- Was there any effort made in the marking of the ballots to make them appear differently as though marked by different hangs?

A .- What I marked I changed the form of the mark and the other fellows as much as I took notice of just went right ahead and had the same

cross all the way through. Q .- How long on the average would you be engaged in this on the four

nights you have mentioned? FIXED YORK COUNTY. One

A.-The first three nights. night we worked until 2 o'clock. The last night when we fixed up the York county ballots we worked until half past 1 o'clock, and then two of us. got York county, and two of us stayed until morning. Q .-- Can you name any of the counties the ballots of which were mark-

ed in this manner? A .-- Yes sir. Q.-Name some of them? A .-- Blaine, Banner, Chase, Dodge,

Brown, Keya Paha, Dawson, Gosper, Keith, Wayne, Box Butte, McPherson, Scotts Bluff, Cherry. Q.-How about Harlan county? A .- Harlan county.

Q .- How about Dundy county? A.-Yes sir. Q.-And Sioux?

A.-Yes sir.

Q.-And York county? A .- York county was the last.

Q.-And Dodge county? A .- That was fixed afterwards.

Q .- You did fix Dodge county? A .- The way we fixed that we laid

Q .- Do you remember how many one precinct on another and counted ballots were changed or altered in any them. way? -Explain that again please? A.-No sir, I do not, we just altered A.-After the legislative committee them as we got to them, we kept no took the ballots I got on first as one of the clerks and it was my place to open the packages of ballots and the envelopes and then I would give the counters the ballots and they would hand them back to me and I would something over a thousand. take half of those and lay them on the next precinct and send them back York county had? as much as I thought the package would stand. A .- Twelve hundred. Q.-In other words you would count them over several times? lation to those ballots?

Q .- Was the names of the judges purported to be signed or written on that would be done? cny of them?

A .- They was in one or two places.

BALLOIS IDENTIFIED, (The envelope marked Exhibit "11" A .-- No sir, one of the commission. Q .- What connection if any did he was opened by the committee and the fallots marked with the initial letter "F" at the top and are counted by the have with the democratic or populist party? A .-- He was treasurer of the State

Q .- Who gave you the assurance

Q.-Was Blake a member of the leg-

Q.-And Edmisten was chairman?

Q.-How did you know you could

help yourself by helping them count

the ballots, who told you or where did

you get your information from if any-

A .- Blake and Edmisten knew I had

a case ready for the supreme court

and if we would steal those two judges

in I had two of them favorable to me.

HE WAS A REFORMER.

A .--- I affiliated with the populists.

lots before from those precincts in

York county, mcFadden precinct, have

you examined all those ballots to-day?

Q .- Did you find any ballots there

Q .- While you were in the vault the

A .- Edmisten got the first county

and took it in, and when I came in

with the second county they were

marking, Edmisten, and Blake and an-

other party. Edmisten got the first

package of ballots from the secretary's

A .- Out of the secretary's room.

Q .- How did you get in the Secre-

A .- There was a guard there let us

Q .- Did you see anything when he

Q.-How do you know if you

Q .- Who told you to go to the sec-

Q .- And what did he say if anything

A.-We understood what we wanted. Q.-You learned that in a private

Q .- How did you understand they

A .- They were doing it and Edmis-

Q .- Did he say that was the way to

Q .- Did you commence marking on

A .- I started to mark on the package

Q.-And continued to mark until

Q .- How many were marking alto-

Q.-How long did you continue at

ten said the commission would count

were to mark two yesses to overcome

about what he wanted with the bal-

Q .- About what time was that?

first night you were changing the bal-

lots who did the marking first?

Q .- Where did he get it?

A .- It was under his coat.

A.-To get the ballots.

those for the amendment.

the package you took in:

they got through that package?

that are ballots that were marked by

yourself or anyone else for this recount

Q .- Now with reference to those bal-

party did you affiliate with?

Q .- At that time what particular

A .--- Edmisten and Blake,

Islature?

Central committee.

A.-Yes, sir.

body told you?

A.-Mostly.

commission?

room.

in.

tary's room?

came in?

lots?

a "no?"

couldn't see it?

retary's office?

conversation?

mark them?

A.-Yes, sir.

they had there.

A.-Yes, sir.

A.-Seven

gether?

A.-Yes, sir.

A.-Edmisten.

Q. What for?

A .-- I did see it.

A .- Eight o'clock.

A.-Yes, sir.

- I concerned &

44

committee and found to contain 202 ballots.) Q .-- Handing you a bunch of ballots

taken from the envelope containing the ballots cast for the constitutional amendment of McFadden township I will ask you if you can identify any of the ballots altered by you or those with you and will ask you if you can identify any of the ballots and the names of the judges written by you on them

or any of those with you? A .--- I identify some of the ballots as ballots charged by myself and the other man that was with me. I also

never went through the ballot box.

terations you discover on them?

identify some of the ballots there that

Q .- Handing you this ballot exhibit

A .- That ballot was voted no at the

top of the page that was not for all

the amendments and it was change l

by putting one yes at the head and

one cross opposite the head for the

A.-That is the method that was

adopted for the ballot that had a no

Q .-- What was your proceedure in

A .- In case the ballot was blank

Q .- Suppose you found a ballot with

the no, opposite the proposition for the

supreme judges, what did you do

A .- We would put a cross opposite

the yes and a cross opposite the upper

yes, that is, voting two yeses for the

Q .- Then how would you count it?

amendment the benefit of the doubt.

A.-The commission gave the

Q .- The two yeses overcame the one

Q .- And you were there to create a

Q .- In case of a ballot in which

there was a no cross, opposite each of

the proposed amendments, what was

A .- Make a yes opposite the amend-

Q .-- Handing you exhibit 38 I will

Q.-This ballot identified as exhibit

38 shows a cross after the word no,

after each of the amendments, at the

top it also shows a cross after the yes.

and it shows a cross after the yes on

the amendment increasing the number

of judges, how would a ballot of that

Q .-- And was that the rule you foi-

A .- Yes sir, we counted the yes for

the amendment for the judges and the

ask you whether you recognize that as

your procedure in such a case?

ment and a yes at the end of it.

reasonable doubt for the committee?

the cross was put opposite the upper

voted in at the head of the ticket.

case the ballot was blank?

then?

no?

amendment.

A.-Yes sir.

A .-- Yes sir.

an altered ballot?

kind be counted?

lowed right along?

that.

that?

ing count.

misten?

Q .-- What was said?

of the legislative session.

you what was to be done?

versation took place?

A.-In his office.

they were elected.

A.-Yes sir.

the judges in.

operations?

done?

that is all.

A .- Yes sir.

way through.

CONTENTS.

favor?

were you to receive?

eated in the ballots.

would find enough ballots to show that

Q .- When did you first talk with Ed-

A .- That was prior to the beginning

Q .- He told you did he that you

Q.-And engaged you to, that is told

A .- No sir, he didn't say we were to

do any marking, only we would steal

Q .- Where were you when this con-

Q.-Did you talk over your affairs o.

A .- Not until the commission was

Q .- What was said when you started

A .- I don't know only to mark them

Q .- He set the example for you, did

he show you what he wanted done?

to mark no, and to mark the yes and

that would count. I learned the next

day they had passed a resolution by

the commission to give the benefit of

the doubtful ballots to the amend-

ment, two yeses and one no was

counted for the amendment so that

was the way it was carried on all the

Q .- What compensation or rewar1

A .- I wasn't to receive any except

the consideration of my case before the

Q .- That was the understanding was

it, your case should be decided in you-

A .- Yes sir, among the parties inter-

if anything. Give the conversation

that was had as to what should be

Q .- Did Edmisten mark any?

no for all the balance.

A .- For the amendment.

A .- Yes sir, it is.

37 I will ask you to point out any al-

preme court, and who had openly threatened to kill one of the judges if the right kind of a decision was not rendered. One was a roustabout, who had a son serving time in the state lating the recount. penitentiary. One was a political mountebank who was later kicked out of the service of the exposition commission because of questionable dealings. All of the men were men who placed political success before honesty, Central Committee. and who, as future events proved, were promised good places or substantial rewards at the expense of the state treasury. It was a force of men well equipped to perform secretly by night and | and I wanted to help steal those judges by day. The men in the legislature who were

assisting in the deal did their part well. to him about that? They stole seats to gain the necessary majority, and they passed a recount I was there every day. bill which contained no penalty for fraudulent counting. All this is down itol building? in black and white in the public records, and is an open page in the minds of the people of Nebraska.

When the public indignation became so strong that the conspirators were comrelled to do the balance of the him was there anything done and if work in the light of day the plan to so what was it and when? count in the judges failed, and an attempt was made to destroy the proof of the fraud. The secretary of state. the ink upon whose certificate and oath of office was hardly dry, made way with the original tally sheets, and has never since dared to make them public. All this was done to protect Silas A. Holcomb and his law partner and his political partner and the chairman of his state committee.

Of the men who participated in the recount fraud, all received future rewards except one, and he turned state's evidence on the others. He first confessed to his attorney, who was a man high up in the counsels of the populist party, and then to a populist newspaper man, who gave the story to the public. Chairman Edmisten of the state committee at once confessed his own guilt by making an attempt to kidnap the informer and hustle him EDMISTEN SWIPES THE BALLOTS. out of the country before he could testify to a grand jury.

## THE INFORMER CORROBORATED.

The man Simons, who gave away the story, was not a reputable man, and he was known to be absolutely without character when Holcomb appointed him to handle the people's ballots. Under ordinary circumstances his testimony would be viewed with much suspicion. But he has told a straight story, both to the newspapers and on the witness stand, and step by step his story has been corroborated by others, until it must be accepted as the truth. Every opportunity has been given for the conspirators to deny or refute the story, and none of them have had the hardihood to appear.

Last July, when the legislative investigating committee was in session, E. L. Simons and Silas A. Holcomb were room? both called as witnesses to testify as denied the authority of the committee all the blanks excepting three or four excepting the recount commission.

A .- Yes, sir; he occupied the corner opposite Edmisten's.

Q .- Where were these ballots at that time? A .- In the secretary of state's office.

- Q .- In what manner?
- A .- They were in packages as received by the secretary.
- Q .- Was there a guard over them? A .--- Yes, sir.
- Q .- Who was it?
- A., -Kolsey.
- Q-When Edmisten got the ballots what did he do with them?
- A .- Opened the envelopes and got them out
- Q .- What was done with them in the

A .-- We took them in the vault and to the counting of the ballots. Holcomb opened the envelopes and marked up A .-- Four nights.

Q .- Tell about the date of this? A .- The first night of the day after the commission was organized. It was the four nights following that.

Q .- I wish you would tell the manner in which the ballots were kept in

the secretary's office. Were they in a vault?

A .- No sir, they were in the big room. Q .- Piled up were they?

A .- Yes sir, on the east side of the room leading to the main hall from

the secretary's office, Q .- Was that one of the rooms used by the secretary of state in his ordinary business?

A .- Yes sir. Well, it wasn't used at the time of the recount at all. There wasn't anyhody clas in there

A-Yes sir. Q .- That was done during the session of the recount committee? A .- And the legislative committee,

ves Q.-The committee was all present? A .- They didn't know anything of

Q .- Who did know of it besides you?

A .- The man we was counting for. Q.-Who was he?

OBERFELTER A BALLOT FIXER. A .-- I think it was Oberfelter. Q.-He was a member of the committee?

A .- He was a member of the governor's commission, and after the legislature started the count the commission was all employed as clerks helping to count them except Hedlund.

Q.-Do you recognize any of those exhibits lying before you on the table? A.-Yes sir.

Q .- If you were to look at any of those could you identify them as the ballots you nad marked?

A .- This package of ballots were blanks that had not been used at the polls and we got them down there and we just marked them for the amendment and we put them in.

Q .- Can you explain how they come to be separate in this matter?

appointed. A .- They were put in different wards.

Q .- In other words you distributed those uncast unllots?

A .- Yes sir. They were distributed and rejected by the recount people. Q .- Was there anything done by

way of trying to affect the signature of the judges on any of those ballots?

A .- There was in one precinct. Q .-- What precinct?

-At the precinct in which McCool

Junction is in. Q .- Could you identify any of those

if you could see them?

A .- Yes sir.

Q .-- At the time that you opened the envelopes containing the ballots on this amendment in the several precincts in York county, or they were opened by you and others, were there any uncast ballots in any of the packagea?

A .- In the large package there was a big roll of unused ballots.

Q .- Not signed by any particular person?

A .- They were signed by nobody they were blank.

Q .- What was done with those? A .- We marked them up with crosses

and scattered them in.

track of that, we had not time for that. it that night? Q.-Can you make an estimate? A .- Until half past eleven or twelve. Q .- How did you get the ballots out A .- Why there was in the 21 counof the package? ties I think there were something like A .--- Untied the string and broke the seven thousand. Harlan county had seal open. .Q-What did you do with the bal-Q.-Do you remember how many lots after you got through? A .- Wrapped them up in a package Q .- Mr. Simons, when was it that again. Q.-And put a seal on them? Mr. Edmisten first spoke to you in re-A .- Yes, sir. Q .- Couldn't anyone tell the seal A .- Why, when Edmisten spoke to had been opened? me it was about the beginning of the session, others spoke to me prior to A HANDY MAN. A .- Yes, sir but the man that opened Q .- Who had spoken to you before them in the morning was helping fix them at night. A .- Some of the rest that was help-Q.-That man was whom? A.-Blake. Q .- Did you see the commission at THE SCHEME OUTLINED. work in the morning? A.-They said they were going to A .-- Yes, sir: I saw them there. have a recount of the judges and they

Q .- Who was opening the packages? A.-Blake.

Q .- After they told you that this marking ballots had to be stopped did Mr. Blake or Edmisten ever talk with you about what had been done. Did either of them ever talk with you about it? Ever say anything to you about

would be one of the parties to help do secrecy? A .- Well, at the last election-

Q .- No, right at this time after you stopped marking ballots?

A .- No, they didn't say anthing then. Q .- Did you know it was a crime and there was a penalty attached to it? A .--- I know there was a law to that

effect but I knew it was no good. Q .- How did you know it was no good?

A .- We all knew it up there.

Q .- How did you find it out, you are not a lawyer?

A .- 1 am no lawyer, but I knew the way they passed the oill it wasn't any good.

Q .- Did you get any information from any source?

A .--- Only what we talked over there. Q .- Did you have any assurance from anybody that they would stand by you if you would take the chances? A .- Nothing only that I wouldn't be

imprisoned long.

Q .- Who told you that? A .- Yes sir. He started off showing

A .- Edmisten. where to change the ballots and where

THE GOVERNOR WOULD FIX THINGS.

Q.-What aid he tell you he would do if you were tried and convicted? A .- He said if they should catch us

and send us up as long as we had the governor with us we wouldn't stay in prison long.

Q .- The governor would pardon you? A .--- Yes, sir.

Q .-- Are you positive Edimsten told you that?

A .--- Yes, sir.

Q .- Did Blake tell you that? A .- We were all in the room while the talk was going on.

Q-Did you have any communica-

tion with the secretary of state? A .- Not until after it was all over

with