



How They "Let Well Enough Alone."

Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Bristow Admits that the Facts of the Irregularities in the Postoffice Department, Recently Made Known, Were Laid Before the Republican Administration as Long Ago as July 6th, 1899.

One of the most important reports relative to the postoffice scandals was made public June 17. This is the reply of Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Bristow to the charges made by Seymour W. Tulloch, former cashier of the Washington city postoffice. Mr. Bristow deals with the exposé relating to irregularities in the postal department and says the report of inspection and investigations at the Washington postoffice by inspectors between June 30, 1899, and July 31, 1900, together with the charges made several years ago by Mr. Tulloch and conclusions thereon then reached by Postmaster General Charles Emory Smith. The Washington correspondent for the Chicago Chronicle, referring to Mr. Bristow's report, says:

These papers constitute by far the most significant documents yet made public as a result of the sweeping postal investigation. The reports show the existence of many irregularities during the period involved. The inspector who investigated the irregularities reports that the files of the postoffice cashier show direct orders from superior authority for the disbursement of all the questionable items cited. The inspector urged "that the responsibility for the many illegal appointments, the payment of two salaries to one and the same person and the disbursement of thousands of dollars for which practically no service was performed should be placed where it properly belongs and the many abuses corrected."

In a summary of the several reports the postmaster general says:

"The charge of Mr. Tulloch is, in its essence, against President McKinley and Postmaster General Smith. President McKinley is no longer living; Postmaster General Smith, who carried out President McKinley's policy, has answered for himself. With regard to the present management of the Washington postoffice and the conduct of any and all men charged with wrong-doing who have been in the postal service under the present administration a thorough and searching investigation is now being made and when it is ended all the facts in the case will be made public, as also whatever action may be taken in view of such facts."

The documents made public today show that on May 1 last Mr. Payne wrote a letter to Mr. Bristow calling attention to the published interview with Mr. Tulloch and asked Mr. Bristow: "What truth, if any, is there in the statements and particularly upon that part which speaks of your connection and that of the postoffice inspectors?"

Mr. Bristow in his reply, dated three days later, said:

"At the time of the transfer of the Washington postoffice to John A. Merritt, incoming postmaster, by James P. Willett, retiring postmaster, June 30, 1899, inspection was in progress and as nearly as I can remember Chief Inspector Cochran and Inspector in Charge Smith called upon me and advised me that the inspectors in the investigation of the postoffice had discovered many irregularities of a serious nature which seemed to be authorized by the department. After discussing the matter at some length with them I directed that a report relating in general to the transfers be submitted in the regular way and copies of the same referred to the various divisions or bureaus of the department and that a special report affecting the irregularities that seemed to be authorized by the department be submitted."

"During the progress of the inspection I was advised by the chief inspector that George W. Beavers, chief of the salary and allowance division, had suggested to one of the inspectors that when he came to certain appointments in some of the stations that appeared irregular he had better make no reference to them, as they had been ordered personally by the postmaster general. I told the chief inspector to instruct the inspectors to report the facts as they would in any other inspection; that I did not believe the postmaster general had knowingly authorized any irregularities."

"Captain W. B. Smith, inspector in charge, submitted a special report on July 6 as directed, which disclosed what seemed to me glaring irregularities, and I submitted it personally to the postmaster general, suggesting to him at the time that it contained matters to which I thought he would want to give his personal attention."

"Referring to the statement that I had demanded a thorough investigation of the office of the first assistant postmaster general, I beg to state that Inspector in Charge Smith in his special report stated that he had discovered a condition of affairs which, in his judgment, required an immediate, thorough and exhaustive investigation. I submitted this report to the postmaster general with my approval, but I did not consider such approval as a demand on my part that the office of the first assistant postmaster general be investigated."

Regarding the inspection in 1900 Mr. Bristow says he was informed by the chief inspector that complaint was made to the postmaster general that Inspector Little, who was engaged on the work, "was asking unnecessary

questions and seeking information which was not called for in an inspection." Inspector Little was instructed to make the same kind of an investigation that he would make of any other office. After an inquiry Mr. Bristow was clearly convinced that the questions asked were not unnecessary or improper."

Expenditures irregularly charged to the Washington office and which belonged to the department itself are specified in the report of the inspection in June, 1899. It says that Robert V. Willett, a son of the postmaster at that time, drew two salaries from July 1 to December 10, 1898, one as a laborer as a laborer at the city postoffice at \$600 a year and the other as a mechanic at \$2 a day for each workday, on what appears to have been a special roll of the free delivery service, and that N. H. Baker likewise was designated as a laborer on the postoffice roll April 29, 1899, at \$700 per annum and on the same date as mechanic on the free delivery roll at \$2 a day. The inspectors say that on June 30, 1899, twenty-two employes were borne on the rolls and paid on what has been known as the "military roll," while the "military roll" shows thirty-four names as having been paid by the cashier of the Washington postoffice.

There was also found a "special roll" of employes, paid from miscellaneous allowances, these appointments being under control of the postoffice department. This roll consists of nine "cleaners," with salaries from \$400 to \$600, and one "physician" at a salary of \$1,700. Some of the "cleaners" appear to have performed very little service and others none at all.

The most important exhibit is the confidential report of Postoffice Inspector in Charge Smith of the Washington division, made in July, 1899, setting forth irregularities which he urged should be investigated. He names four employes on the military roll who "appear not to have performed any service in connection with military postal matters and for whose original appointment or continuance on the rolls no good reason exists." The payment to W. S. Larner, a military postal clerk, under protest, by the cashier, of \$118.93 subsequently disallowed by the auditor of the treasury on January 4, 1899, is gone into at length and it is shown that this matter was entirely irregular and that payments were directed without proper vouchers. The inspector says that while the cashier was out of the office temporarily, and having left instructions that no final payment be made to Larner until his ex-

pense account was adjusted by the auditor, Larner called and demanded an immediate settlement, and when settlement was not made at once he appealed to the department and the acting postmaster on demurring further was informed by the department that the "Washington office held a letter from the first assistant postmaster general directing payment to be made to Mr. Larner and if that was not good enough perhaps it would obey one signed by the postmaster general. The amount was finally paid under written instructions. On December 12 and 14 Larner was requested to call at the Washington office and furnish information required by the auditor and return \$8.16 overpayment of salary obtained by misrepresentation, but no answer was received to such requests."

Attention is called to certain items of expenditures authorized for the military postal service of supplies, furniture, traveling expenses, aggregating \$8,750.70, with the statement that whether the foregoing items were purchased in the open market or as the result of competitive bids the inspector is unable to say, but that the prices paid for some of the articles enumerated, such as washstands at \$40 each, appear to have been highly excessive and lead to the belief that the feature of competition did not enter into the transaction.

An interesting feature concerns irregularities in the appointment, compensation and promotion of Oliver H. Smith. On November 20, 1897, the first assistant postmaster general authorized an allowance of \$600 per annum for his appointment as laborer, stating that the free delivery division would also allow \$2 per day to cover car fare and incidental expenses. Smith drew pay from November 23, 1897, to November 30, 1898, making his compensation for one year approximately \$1,348.60. The inspector reports "no one has certified to the actual time Smith was employed nor has any statement been attached to his pay vouchers showing what particular service he rendered. He was continued in the dual capacity of clerk and mechanic until April 1, 1899, when he was promoted to be finance clerk at \$1,700 a year." The inspector says he knows of no authority of law for his appointment or promotion.

The inspector cites many similar cases of irregularities. Many men were drawing two salaries, others were not known to be doing any work for their money. Three women were carried on the pay roll, it was said, by order of Postmaster General Smith who were not known to do any work in connection with the department.

Being, Not Seeming.

Nature intended the face to be the stamp of man's character. Man changed that standard into clothes. Yet, long ago, both were found wanting, and the verdict given, "All is not gold that glitters." Shakespeare was, perhaps, the greatest character reader that ever lived, and we may know that his judgment was correct.

We see it every day—the well-dressed man admitted to the highest society who, if his true life were known, would be cast out as the lowest scoundrel. On the other hand, the poor deserving man of brains is given the cold shoulder because he does not wear a silk hat and a coat of broad-cloth. It would surprise some of our good people to know just with whom they come in contact every day. If

some mighty magician could lay bare the hearts of mortal man, what a scene would be presented.

O, let us be, not seem. Let us be our own selves under all circumstances. Let us throw away the deceit and hypocrisy of which already the world has had a surfeit. Let our smiles be frank and true, bespeaking the kindly thoughts within, and let our lives show forth these thoughts.—The Idealist.

With the Paragraphers.

Paducah News-Democrat: Anybody who ever thought Perry Heath would do anything at any time ought to go right round the barn and be ashamed of himself—according to Perry.

Indianapolis Sentinel: Having been

scoundly whipped by Senator Foraker, Mr. Hanna is now going blithely forward to a tremendous thrashing by the next Ohio democratic senatorial nominee.

Columbus Citizen: Mr. Hanna is quite right in insisting that his chief object in life at present is his own reelection. That is the first thing to come and the indications are that it will come hard.

Boston Herald: When Rockefeller and Gould and the Pennsylvania railroad and other warriors of their size get to quarreling, it is just as well for other folks to stand from under and save their money.

Seattle Times: The principal difference between the hidebound Missouri democrat and the hidebound Pennsylvania republican is that the

former is sending his boodlers to the penitentiary, while the latter is not.

Indianapolis Sentinel: That was a touching scene at Cheyenne when the sorrel gelding Ragalona knelt before President Roosevelt and worshiped for a moment in silence. Ragalona brushed a tear away as he turned from the scene, and there were not half so many dry eyes in the audience as dry throats when the ceremony was over.

Johnstown Democrat: While at home we are denouncing the feeble little libel law of Pennypacker, the supreme court of the Philippine islands calmly upholds a decision by which two American editors were condemned, without even a jury trial, to six months' imprisonment and \$1,000 fine each for criticising a public official.