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The Dispensary Under Investigation.

Startling Facts in Regard to Operation of the G. M. I.—Spicy Stuff in Col. Mixon's Testimony.

Columbia State:

While the proceedings yesterday in the investigation into conditions at the dispensary did not bring out any violently sensational information, yet there was enough in what was said by the witnesses to impress thinking people with the fact that the system has been loosely conducted somewhere. The most startling evidence of this kind was from Mr. S. T. Carter, clerk in the State treasurer's office. Mr. Carter stated that while all of the county dispensaries are required to make weekly remittances to the State treasurer, many of them until a short time ago took their own good time about reporting.

Mr. W. O. Tatum, commissioner, testified that, although he is the highest salaried officer connected with the institution, although he is bonded for \$75,000 with the American Surety company and the other officers of the dispensary are not bonded, yet when he made a recommendation that whiskey should be bought in bulk with reference to price and not by grade, the board not only did not act upon his suggestion but has not acknowledged the receipt of his letter. The law requires the purchasing to be done as Mr. Tatum recommended.

Before beginning the taking of evidence yesterday, a mass of statistical information from the books at the State dispensary was presented by the subcommittee. There really was a great deal more of this than had been expected, and the showing was comprehensive. Although it was not quite in the shape that was expected by the subcommittee, they will have their expert accountant, Mr. W. W. Bradley of Abbeville, to go over the figures and aggregate the items belonging to all of the big houses which ship to the dispensary. Mr. Bradley has been engaged by the committee in this special work for several weeks. The lists of stock and of purchases were not prepared by him but by some of the members of the dispensary clerical staff.

In these figures it was brought out that the liabilities of the dispensary are increasing and that not one cent has been paid into the school fund since the 10th of January. The dispensary now owes half a million dollars for liquor and supplies and in addition to this had ordered, but had not received, liquor in value amounting to \$300,000. The assets consist of the stock on hand in the State dispensary and in the county dispensaries and the real estate of the State dispensary, valued at \$52,000. Commissioner Tatum's explanation for this increase in the amount of liabilities is that he was compelled by law last year to reduce the stock in hand at the State dispensary to a point below \$400,000 in value, and that the only way to do it was by increasing the liabilities. He stated that there is \$42,000 to the credit of the school fund,

but not yet paid out. Mr. Carter in his evidence stated that should the State be called upon tomorrow to pay this there is nothing in the treasury with which to give the schools the \$42,000 noted in the list of liabilities as being a part of the school fund.

There was a ripple of interest when Mr. Carter testified that he had to turn down a warrant for \$5,000 from the commissioner yesterday on account of a lack of funds, but really the incident is not sensational. A bank would not have turned down the warrant, but the State of South Carolina knows no one so far as the State treasurer's office is concerned, and nothing but a certified check would be accepted there in payment of anything due the office.

There was another ripple of interest when it was stated in effect that the State treasurer's office is, so to speak, the cashier for the State dispensary and that there is a difference of \$30,000 in the statement of cash on hand from the State dispensary and from the State treasurer's office. But Mr. Charles, clerk to the board of control, stated yesterday that this matter could be explained and will be explained. Another matter which was not understood was the fact that the dispensary had sent to the State treasurer yesterday two checks aggregating about \$31,000, but Mr. Charles, unofficially, stated that these had been drawn from the "emergency fund" kept by the commissioner, in order to put some money on deposit with the State treasurer to meet outstanding warrants drawn by the dispensary.

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDING.

"Warmer, warmer," say the children when they play hide the switch and the seekers are getting close to the object of their search. The members of the dispensary investigating committee felt that they were getting "warmer" upon the trail yesterday afternoon when Col. F. M. Mixon, former commissioner, testified that a few months ago, while representing J. W. Kelly & Co., of Chattanooga, he had received letters with instructions to see certain parties.

But Col. Mixon was obdurate. He had given a lot of interesting and racy testimony, but on this point he would not budge from his position. The letters from Kelly & Co., to himself, he said, were in the nature of confidential communications to an employee from his "boss." In vain did Mr. Gaston plead that the case is that of the State of South Carolina against J. W. Kelly & Co., with Mixon as but a middle man, but Col. Mixon could not be persuaded that it is his duty to give up the letters.

He was ordered to be in contempt and placed in the custody of the marshal, but later was paroled upon his oath bound promise to keep all the letters intact pending a conference between himself and his lawyer. For some reason or other, the members of the commission seem to set great store by those letters, and Col. Mixon's embarrassment and reticence would be enough to arouse their suspicions as to the nature of the letters.

There was other spicy stuff in Col. Mixon's evidence. He testified to having turned down while

dispensary commissioner an attempt at bribe from Sam Lanahan, at that time a member of the firm of William Lanahan & Son and now a director of the Richmond distillery. He swore that Lanahan had offered him \$30,000 a year to divert to Lanahan an account of \$400,000 which had been given to another distiller in Baltimore. Furthermore that Seth Scruggs, his bookkeeper, had been offered \$5,000 by Lanahan to get Mixon to accept the bribe. Two other firms had offered Mixon bribes, according to his testimony. One of these was the Mill Creek Distilling company of Cincinnati, which is alleged to have been mixed up in some other matters of a scandalous nature antedating Col. Mixon's connection with the dispensary.

Col. Mixon took a fall out of the present administration of the dispensary by declaring that the increase in sales is not due to rigid enforcement of the law against blind tigers, but to the fact that he observed the law strictly in regard to sales to blind tigers and drunkards, and the sales had been curtailed for this and other reasons, whereas the system now is lax and lenient.

Commissioner Tatum yesterday occupied the stand from 9.30 until 1 o'clock and made a good witness, being always ready with his answer, but he would generally come back to the starting point—and that is, he would repeat that the dispensary business would be all right with the case goods features eliminated. He spoke of a careful inventory which had been made when he took charge as if that were the only one in the existence of the dispensary, but Col. Mixon showed his annual report in 1895 to have given in printed form every item of stock on hand.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Tatum occupied himself principally with advising what should be done to make the dispensary safe and sound, there was some good meat in his testimony. He told in detail of the loss of \$2,100 by Inspector Brown; he told of the visit of himself and Mr. L. W. Boykin to Cincinnati when Mr. Boykin contracted for the printing of \$38,000 worth of labels and where Mr. Tatum found his hotel bill paid.

When asked as to shortages, the names of Morris and Poland in Spartanburg appeared to be most deeply set in his mind until Mr. Lyon drew out by cross examination the fact that Mr. Bryan Lawrence of Augusta, Ga., owes the dispensary \$3,000 and has been owing it for several years and is willing to be sued for it in Charleston or in Augusta. He owes the \$3,000 in settlement of the affair of his privilege on the Isle of Palms.

Mr. Tatum named the houses which had been putting too many bottles in cases and had been guilty of other irregularities and stated that these same houses are selling to the dispensary right along.

Mr. Tatum thinks the dispensary plan is the proper solution of the liquor question. There is no doubt about that. He answers in a positive manner which shows his convictions. He made a good impression on the witness stand and his reiteration that the way to strengthen the dispensary is by eliminating the case goods feature is in itself a severe arraignment of the system as it is now conducted.

Mr. Roddey's Views On Cotton Prices.

The Well-Known Buyer Puts Forth a Good Argument.

To the Editor of The Record:

I am often asked for an expression of opinion regarding the probable or possible price of cotton for the season, and I give my reasons both for and against higher prices.

IN FAVOR OF HIGHER PRICES.

1. We have the worst August report as to condition ever issued by the Government, which on its face should cause higher prices.

2. The financial strength of our Southern banks should prevent farmers from forced sales when the market is depressed. The farmers are being educated to this.

3. The farmers' new independence and the gradual knowledge and realization that pure gambling manipulation has so long caused him to sacrifice his cotton.

4. That if the farmer should happen to realize that the world is dependent upon his production, while he could be independent of the rest of the world, and then should be governed by this knowledge.

5. That the prices of cloths and yarns justify higher prices for cotton and that an immense amount of goods are already sold ahead out of the coming season's production. If sellers could not so easily secure what they have in imagination sold, what would happen.

6. That the New Orleans Convention proved to incredulous farmers and to the rest of the world that even the remnant of a fourteen-million bale crop could bring 11 cents, a supposed impossible thing.

7. The disposition even now in localities shown by the farmer to haul cotton home or warehouse it, rather than take less than 10 cents per pound.

8. That if it is realized that the remnant of a fourteen-million bale crop could bring 11 cents and if the Government and Cotton Association reports are at all correct, what shall the remnant of a ten-million bale crop bring?

NOW AGAINST PROSPECTIVE HIGHER PRICES.

1. The whole world is dependent on the South's cotton, and naturally or otherwise endeavor to depress prices. What are exchanges for? To make a market price for cotton. What price? Just as low as producers who have a monopoly will submit to. What makes the price? The preponderance of speculative money. Why will prices probably be lower? Because the law permits selling cotton that doesn't exist, and spot prices are fixed by future trading.

2. That were the farmers to receive a good price and make a good crop they might become financially independent and prevent thereafter being dictated, to and such conditions will be fought in every possible manner.

3. The fact that professional have always succeeded in forcing prices down, and that cotton never brings even present prices through the month of October and November, during which months the largest percentage is usually marketed.

4. That mills use cotton twelve months in the year, whereas farmers

try to market their cotton in a few months, and with absolutely no system.

5. That the rest of the world studies the Southern farmer, his disposition, his condition; whereas the Southern farmer doesn't realize his importance nor study conditions for improvement. He is too easily contented, doesn't know his real strength, nor take advantage of his position.

6. The Southern farmer, as a rule, has no facilities for storing or taking care of his crop without exorbitant insurance rates, and may sell, not realizing that a warehouse storage receipt is as good and as convertible as a Government bond.

7. The large wealthy bear operators have sold futures heavily short and will probably force farmers to sell at prices they fix for their profits. They have been successful and nothing succeeds like success.

8. The absolute disbelief by the bears in the intelligence of the farmer and their contempt for his being able to carry anything through successfully.

The fight this season, if the farmers are bold enough to make one, will be most beautiful and the world will watch it with great interest. Here we have the farmer with his monopoly, his financial ability, his warehouse system, his every natural advantage in the way of decreased acreage and poor crop conditions, the great demand and high prices for goods on the one side; and on the other, the rich bear, with his money, his influence, the rest of the world with him in his disbelief in the farmer's ability and knowledge of his position, his former success and his many peculiar tactics for depressing prices.

If the farmers win this fight they will be respected hereafter on exchanges, and will show to the world that they are not the weak, ignorant and helpless class they are now considered. If they lose, the big bear will smack his lips, feel his importance and continue to reach out for more money and money. Which will win? Is it not a most beautiful opportunity for the fight? Which have the more courage? Which will hold out the longer?

Truly yours,
John T. Roddey.

Four Year Old Boy Shot Himself With Handy Weapon.

Newberry, Aug. 21.—The little 4-year-old son of Mr. W. H. Hilber of West End accidentally shot himself through the arm with a 32-calibre revolver late on Saturday evening. It appears that the child's parents were out of the room when the accident occurred. The pistol had been left lying within the boys reach and he used it for a plaything with the unfortunate result above stated. Dr. W. E. Pelham, Jr., was summoned and it is not thought that the wound will prove serious.

NO FALSE CLAIMS.

The proprietors of Foley's Honey and Tar do not advertise this as a "sure cure for consumption." They do not claim it will cure this dread complaint in advanced cases, but do positively assert that it will cure in the earlier stages and never fails to give comfort and relief in the worst cases. Foley's Honey and Tar is without doubt the greatest throat and lung remedy. Refuse substitutes. Sold by Funderburk Pharmacy.

Democratic Voters of Greenville Demand Three Resignations.

Greenville News.

Indignant because of the muddled, crooked condition of the county's finances recently exposed through the efforts of Avery Patton and the other members of the investigating committee, the Democratic voters of Bessie precinct met Thursday evening and adopted resolutions demanding the immediate resignation of Commissioner T. P. Neves from the present county board in view of his sworn testimony while under examination as to his official acts in the same capacity during a previous administration. The resolutions also ask Expert Oscar Hodges, employed by the grand jury and Comptroller General Jones, to resign.

When it was shown and not denied, that the state was entitled to rebates, and the books of the institution had no record of receiving these many thousands of dollars, the people were frightened out of thinking by an ingeniously manipulated scarecrow, called "factionalism," and were virtually told to take their eyes away from the accused and watch the accuser; they did it, and the very many thousands of dollars in rebates has never reached the treasury to lighten the people's taxes to this day. The people were told long ago that men connected with the dispensary had suddenly become very rich—men who before assuming management had a hand-to-mouth existence, later became magnates; but their ill-gotten wealth may be hidden in stocks bonds and other investments which can be safely locked up in vaults of trust companies, where no eye but the owner can see the record. These men tell the people to search the banks and the recording offices for their financial standing, and they might as well refer the people to the mar in the moon. They know the tracks are covered; but all the same, like a murder, it will out occasionally, and it is only, when there is an occasional break in the gang that this rebate pocket lined gentlemen are made to side-step. The positive proof is almost impossible to secure. The nearest to it was obtained when the Lyon of the investigation committee flushed the den of hungry carrion at Spartanburg.—Manning Times.

Capt. W. H. Edwards was in Yorkville yesterday and while sitting with some friends in the court house yard discussed the dispensary question. He expressed himself as disagreeing with Senator Tillman in the latter's claim that the dispensary is directed against the senator. The captain claims that the opposition to the dispensary has no political significance whatever. "Why he said, 'didn't Cherokee vote it out 3 to 1; Pickens 3 to 1, Union 2 to 1. All of these counties have supported Tillman in every campaign in which he has ever had opposition and will continue to do so. This is not a political question' the captain continued, 'and I hope it won't become one. The way to prevent that is for all the counties to go right on and vote the dispensary out before the meeting of the next legislature, and settle the question before it gets in the primaries.'—Yorkville Enquirer