

WHAT TILLMAN SAID

THE FULL TEXT OF HIS NOW FAMOUS SPEECH

GOES FOR MARTIN HARD

The Senator Yields His Point for the Sake of Party Harmony, But Leaves Unmistakable Footprints of His Feelings in His Straight-From-the-Shoulder Blows.

On the report of the steering committee of the Democratic caucus, Saturday, March 15, denying him the chairmanship of the committee on appropriations and giving it to Senator Martin, of Virginia, Senator Tillman, of South Carolina, spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman, speaking to the resolution I have just offered, I want to say this: Nothing that this caucus can do will affect my personal or political status, except that it may affect my health. A Chinese philosopher once said, "A duck's legs are short; a stork's legs are long; you cannot make a duck's legs long or a stork's legs short. Why worry?" It is an easy thing to ask a man this question, but we all know that men cannot control their brains, and they will worry in spite of themselves.

The reasons assigned for the action of the steering committee that it is solely because they are solicitous of my health and do not believe I am physically able to perform the arduous labors of the committee on appropriations are sincere I hope, and rest on that motive alone. If I did not believe that this motive governed them I would have to believe that ambition and not the best interests of the Democratic party caused their verdict.

Tillman, as chairman of the committee on appropriations, was the keystone of an arch, and it was necessary to remove this keystone and get Tillman out of the way in order to let some chairmanships very much desired by some men fall where the steering committee wanted them. This is the natural human view to take of it, and I prefer to believe their own version of the affair. I recognize that they are all honorable gentlemen, and I believe not one of them has any reason other than his own judgment as to what is right and proper to actuate him in this matter. I know all human beings are naturally selfish and inevitably so, and when spurred by ambition they sometimes become unscrupulous and cruel. Dealing with motives is very dangerous anyway, and I will not pursue that train of thought further.

I am not contending here so much for myself as for my State and the principle of seniority. By all of the rules that have obtained heretofore in the Senate since the foundation of the Government appointment on committees has been governed by the rule of seniority. It is an unwritten law, almost a constitutional provision, that should not be lightly brushed aside. It has been observed by the steering committee in making up its assignments in the case of every man, except myself. Why this discrimination? South Carolina has seen fit to send me here for eighteen years, and I have just entered on my fourth term and have six more years yet to serve. Last August I was re-elected against two strong men by a large majority without spending a dollar and without making a speech. The people have thus shown their continued love for and trust in me. My long service, and, if I may be permitted to say, my more or less distinguished service entitles me to this chairmanship. Four years longer than Jacob served for his two wives I have striven here in the interest of true democracy. When the Senate had divided to thirty Democrats I was still valiantly battling at the front for the principles and policies outlined in the Chicago platform of 1896. I was on the committee which drafted that platform. Bryan was not a member of it because he was a contesting delegate and only came into the Convention with a right to speak after the committee on credentials had declared his delegation the lawful one. It was late in the proceedings when the delegation was seated, and his speech, as well as one I made at the same time, was in defence of the platform. The goldbugs in that Convention had packed the galleries on purpose to howl me down, and they did it until I told them with all the emphasis which I was capable of that there were only two things which could hiss—a goose, a snake—and a man. That seemed to quiet them and they allowed me to go off without interruption afterwards. I had predated Bryan in advocacy of those principles, for I made my first speech in the Senate, which has been designated the "Pitchfork speech", in January of that year, while Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech was not delivered until in July.

I was a member of the committee on resolutions at the Kansas City Convention four years later and read the platform, as some of you may remember, for no one who heard it can ever forget the demonstration which followed my declamation of that

platform. Four years later at St. Louis, when Parker's gold telegram threw the Democratic cohorts into confusion, and it seemed that the party was about to disband in disorder and become a mob, I again stepped into the breach and made the speech which pacified the delegates. In 1896, 1900 and 1904 I campaigned for the Presidential nominees, although I had no faith whatever in Parker's election and knew he would be defeated, as he ought to have been.

I was not at the Denver Convention because my health had begun to give way and I was in Europe. But in my lectures, which carried me all over the country and into every state, I preached the true gospel and had as much to do with the success of what is now called "progressiveness", I believe, as Bryan himself. That term properly interpreted in its essence is the Chicago platform and nothing else.

I do not mention this for the purpose of influencing your action, but like an old soldier, I point to my work and the wounds I received in battle and ask simply for justice. I do not ask pity or sympathy. I want to give you what I am entitled to and nothing more. Had I not believed that President Wilson wanted me to accept the chairmanship of the committee on appropriations I would not have asked for it, but having received his letter in answer to mine I felt it my duty to ask for the place in order that I might help him, as he seemed to think I could.

In order that you may fully understand everything connected with it I will read the letter I wrote him, and then will read his reply:

January 21, 1917.
The Hon. Woodrow Wilson, Trenton, N. J.—My Dear Mr. Wilson: I despise the words "President-elect" and yet I think of you so much as President to be that I can not bring myself to call you "dear Governor." I have been thinking about writing you for some time. You were kind enough last summer to thank me for the letter I wrote giving you some pointers about the personnel of the national Democratic committee.

This emboldens me to give you some inside information I have gained in my eighteen years in the Senate, and incidentally to make some suggestions or comments on the future policy of the Democratic party.

I am proud of the speech you made at Chicago. It rings true, every word of it, and some of the expressions are very felicitous. In fact, my dear sir, without wishing to make you vain I want to say in all seriousness that you have the happy knack or gift of never opening your mouth in public without saying something worth while. You differ from Charles II, as photographed by the Earl of Rochester, in doing wise things as well as saying them. Of course, you recall the famous motto written on the door of Charles' bed chamber:

"Here lies our sovereign lord the king.
Whose word no man relies on;
He never says a foolish thing,
Nor ever does a wise one."
President Taft has taken Charles' place.

Since I have been in Washington I have seen the appropriation bills grow from a little over four hundred millions of dollars annually to over a thousand millions. You will recall the howl about the "billion-dollar Congress." We have witnessed the change to a two-billion-dollar Congress without much comment. The newspapers seem to take it as a matter of course and are always harping on the growth of the country as a justification. This growth has been marvellous, but the expansion in population and wealth has not kept pace with the growth of the taxes or expenditures. I have heard Senator Aldrich, who surely was an expert on levying taxes for the purposes of protection, proclaim on the floor of the Senate his belief that the Government could be run for \$200,000,000 less than is now being appropriated.

"Being on the committee on appropriations in the Senate, I know just how the appropriation bills have grown so rapidly. It is largely due to personal influence and importunity. Some clerk or officer under the Government wants an increase in his salary, and his Senator or Congressman goes to some one on the committee on appropriations, very often to the chairman, and asks for the item to go in. I have often done it myself to oblige a friend. An increase in the salary of one man produces a desire or demand to increase others, and the result is that the figures are moved up all along the line. This happens in one bureau and immediately other bureaus begin to clamor for increases, and so it goes.

"Then men have haunted the Congress, since I have been here, with schemes for new bureaus. I have seen these created, many of them necessary and useful, but some of them worthless and mere vehicles to spend money and create places for friends.

"Then commission after commission has been appointed for any and every conceivable purpose to make fat places for friends, very often 'lame ducks' who have been repudiated by their constituents. I have seen Republican Presidents who have been glad to take care of Democratic 'lame ducks'. In Cleveland's time I saw Democrats who had been repudiated by their home people on account of free silver rewarded with

Judgeships and appointments on commissions.

"I do not want to tire you, so I will stop this enumeration until I can have the pleasure of talking with you in person. This I do know, Mr. President, that if the Democrats are in earnest about reducing expenditures, it is an easy matter to do it, and that, too, without crippling the Government. It will mean the selection of Cabinet officers who will not be at all complaisant, but intent only on having the Government machine work smoothly, accurately and effectively for the benefit of the office holders. The estimates are all made up by Cabinet officers, and appropriations are always based on estimates, or supposed to be, unless they come as independent propositions from the floor of the Senate Chamber itself. I know you understand the importance of a loyal Cabinet in sympathy with this idea of economy. What we need in the United States is more attention to the needs and protection of the taxpayers than to the wishes and desires of the tax eaters.

"There are any number of buildings in Washington rented at high prices from local real estate agents for Government use. Some of these are necessary, no doubt; but many of them are not necessary at all. This city is a veritable Augean stable and the 'daughters of the horseleech' are abroad and always crying, 'give, give, give!'

"Some of the departments are very much cramped for lack of room. These are clamorous for new buildings. Government buildings have been erected for one purpose, and almost before they are completed the demand grew up for that use to be discontinued and the buildings appropriated for some other use, or rather new one.

"When I first came here the members of the House had no place to receive their visitors or constituents, while the Senators had the 'marble room' and overflow Senators who had no committee rooms were quartered in the Maltby. The House conceived the idea of building a palace for the use of its members; the Senate immediately demanded and enforced that demand to build one for their own use. The marble palaces we now have are the result. Undoubtedly they supply a want, but not a necessity, except on the part of the House. Recently the House has demanded that the Senate turn the Maltby building over to it, and I understand this will be done when the new Congress meets in March. There is much lost space in the Senate office building which could well be utilized to good advantage for other purposes if the Senate would agree.

"But why go into all of these details? You will find it all out when you come to Washington. Speaking with a very intelligent clerk not long ago he made this significant statement: 'Senator, the only way to reduce expenses is to have Senators and Congressmen who will rise in their places and inquire to know why certain items are in the appropriation bills when they are not needed, and say so, and thus call the attention of the country to them.' I know this to be true. But the rule is rather to increase than to reduce.

"My long service here and the custom which has obtained almost from the beginning of the Government entitles me to select from among the committees of which I am a member a chairmanship. I am senior Democrat on three important committees and can select the chairmanship of either one of them: Appropriations, Interstate commerce and naval affairs.

"I want you to tell me frankly on which one of these committees you think I can best serve your administration and the country, for I will serve the country best by serving Wilson's administration best.

"The committee on appropriations, as you know, applies the money, or designates how it shall be spent on many appropriation bills. The committee on Indian affairs, the committee on naval affairs, the committee on military affairs, the committee on rivers and harbors and the committee on pensions make up their own appropriation bills. Thus there is no co-ordination and general understanding by one committee and its head as to the scope and amount of all the appropriations. This was the way it was done when I first came to Congress. I remember what a bitter fight the change from this system to the general distribution of the appropriation bills brought about. There was too much work for any one committee to do, and it gave one many too much power. The change was salutary in that respect, but it has largely been responsible for the increased expenses, taken as a whole.

"The committee on finance in the Senate ought to be divided as it is in the House, one part of it to deal with the tariff and the taxes to raise money, while the other deals with banking and currency and the money problem.

"The committee on interstate commerce, while of minor importance at first, has come to be one of the most important in Congress. It deals with the problem of transportation in all of its ramifications. This problem has come to be one of the greatest of the age. The gamblers in New York, Boston and Chicago who manipulate the stocks and bonds of the banks and railroad securities, have amassed great fortunes based on water alone. Multi-millionaires have multiplied with great rapidity, and the masses of the people are expected to sustain these fortunes by paying dividends

on stocks and bonds which never had any honest or real foundation. Pierpont Morgan and men of that type have been the prime movers and leaders in amassing wealth of this kind. Having 'scrambled the eggs' they boldly stand and ask the committees of Congress what they are going to do about it. Rockefeller, who has amassed millions by monopolies which could have been prevented by an honest enforcement of the Sherman law, rolls in wealth and snaps his fingers at the House committee, Carnegie, whose hundreds of millions have been stolen from the people through Roosevelt's connivance at his organization of the Steel Trust and the absorption of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, tries to buy immortality by giving back to the people a modicum of money in the shape of libraries, etc.

"If you and I were to go into a restaurant and there see the cook mixing rotten eggs to scramble for us would we eat the dish when the waiter brought it to us or would we throw it out of the window? The temper of the American people is to throw the eggs out of the window. Your greater problem will be how to 'unscramble eggs' and bring back the railroads of the country to an honest basis. This will involve a valuation of the railroad properties to find out their actual value, not cost, of the railroads. The committee on interstate commerce will have to do this work, if it be done, and I am therefore inclined to take that burden upon my shoulders, if you so advise, and select that chairmanship.

"The committee on naval affairs has to deal with the question of an 'adequate navy'. This is the happy phrase of the Democratic platform adopted at Baltimore. Just what is an 'adequate and well-proportioned' navy must be determined. Whether it shall be Hobsonized to make a market for structural steel and armor plate manufacturers, or give us such a fleet as will be sufficient for the needs of the country, is a question to be settled.

"My health has been too poor for me to keep abreast of things as I used to do. But I have tried to keep in touch enough and have kept in touch enough to believe that we have a good enough navy now, and only need to maintain it at its present degree of efficiency. The fifteen or twenty millions of dollars required to build a first-class battleship of the best type can do so many more things for the people, and better things, that I do not feel willing to see the money sunk that way, especially when the life of such a vessel is only about twenty years. Already the Oregon made famous in the Spanish-American war, is obsolete and ready for the junk pile.

"If I take the committee on appropriations, I can help reduce expenses. If I take the committee on interstate commerce, I can assist in 'unscrambling the eggs'. If I take the committee on naval affairs, I can resist as best I may the clamor which has been nursed by the money of the steel manufacturers and armor-plate people for an ever-increasing navy. My strength is limited as you know; my will is equal to any task. I realize every day more and more that for the purposes of this world a live jackass is better than a dead Senator.

"Please think this over and give me your advice in the same spirit I have written you.

"Very sincerely, yours,
"H. R. Tillman."

"State of New Jersey, Executive Department.

"Jan 30, 1913.

"Brief absence from my office and constant absorption with the business connected with the opening of our legislative session here have prevented my replying sooner to your most interesting and important letter of the 21st. I want you to know with what deep and genuine appreciation I have read it. I thank you for it very warmly, indeed.

"Confidentially, the appropriations committee is the committee on which you would have the hardest work, but your letter convinced me that it is also the committee in which your interest chiefly lies and where you can certainly be of the greatest and most constant service.

"Ever since I was a youngster I have been deeply interested in our methods of financial legislation. Ever since then I have insisted upon the absolute necessity of a carefully considered and wisely planned budget, and one of the objects I shall have most in mind when I get to Washington will be conferences with my legislative colleagues there with a view to bringing some budget system into existence. This business of building up the expenses of the nation, piece by piece, will certainly lead up to error and perhaps embarrassment.

"I was very much pleased by your re-election and shall look forward with the greatest interest to being associated with you in council.

"Again thanking you for your splendid letter.

"Cordially yours,"

"Woodrow Wilson.
The Hon. Benjamin R. Tillman,
Washington, D. C."

Contrast my services and work for the party with Senator Martin's. Last summer at Baltimore I led the South Carolina delegation. South Carolina's 18 votes were cast first, last and all the time for Woodrow Wilson, while Virginia, led by Martin, never did give Wilson any votes un-

til he no longer needed them.

In June, while the Convention was still balloting and the question as to who would receive the nomination hung in the balance, Mr. Martin gave out an interview and here is what he had to say about the political situation, and his feelings and his advice to the Virginians as to what candidate they ought to support. It speaks for itself, too, and I have no comments to make:

"Virginians support Oscar W. Underwood—They will vote for him as long as he has chance for nomination—Martin is strong for him—Men from Old Dominion will be classed among the Conservatives.

"The great majority of the Virginia delegation," said Senator Thos. S. Martin this afternoon, "will, I am sure, vote for Underwood. I believe that after the first ballot the unit rule will be voted by the necessary two-thirds majority. It ought to be. There is every reason why Underwood should be the nominee; none why he should not be. He is a man of pronounced ability, of clean life, of unblemished record. He has been highly successful as the party leader in the House. Doubt as to his availability because he is a Southern man is heard only from our own people. I have yet to hear of such objection from the North.

"I hope all the Virginia delegates will vote for Judge Parker for temporary chairman. He has been a loyal party worker, and it would be an outrage to defeat him merely on the issue of Mr. Bryan, who chooses to call him a reactionary.

"Of course, I do not mean that Virginia should keep on voting for Underwood if it turns out there is no chance for him. She would then go to some one else, perhaps Clark, perhaps Harmon—to any one rather than to Woodrow Wilson, who has done nothing to deserve party honors unless to help wreck it in his own State."

Is there any progressiveness about this?

"Another phase of this subject and I am through. I have been on the rack, as it were, ever since the caucus met on Monday, last, and have persistently refused to consider getting off the committee on appropriations or of giving up its chairmanship. It seemed that this demand was so insistent that suspicions came into my mind, and in analyzing the situation I grew very angry. I declared to the gentlemen of the committee who came to see me about it that if I were turned down in caucus I would carry the fight into the Senate itself. Yesterday morning, when there had been no conclusion of the case, I went to the capitol and began writing a speech to be delivered in caucus and was engaged on it nearly all day. It was not enough, I assure you, so hot that it almost burned the paper it was written on, for I was angry from the ground up and my indignation was such that I pulled the bridle off and gave free rein to my vitriolic tongue. Some of you who have heard me in days past know that there are few men who can surpass me in saying biting and vindictive things.

I was in this frame of mind last night, but, as is often the case with men of my temper, I spent only two or three hours and then waked up and began to think. All public men know that some of their best thoughts and speeches have come to them in this way. I myself know that if I could have recollected them next day I have made better speeches in bed than I have ever made on the platform or rostrum. When I analyzed the situation and the conditions here my anger vanished. I thought how pitiful and contemptible in comparison was my fight for my rights and the rights of my State as compared with the great battle to be fought and now being fought by Democracy for the rights of the people. I had thought and written bitter things but my passion was stilled and entirely disappeared when I remembered President Wilson's clarion in the last paragraph of his inaugural address:

"I summon all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men, to my side. God helping me, I will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me."

"I decided to write another speech this morning and tell my brother Democrats just how I feel, and then leave it all to them. I still feel a great injustice has been done me in this report. I also feel that Senator Martin has not acted the noble part I expected of him as a Virginian, for not once but twice and even three times since I came to Washington in January he has told me he wanted me to have on the committees whatever place I was entitled to and desired; and he has never notified me that he had changed his feelings or purpose. Senator Martin, after making these voluntary statements and pledges to me, became a member of the steering committee which has given him my chairmanship. Fairness and decency, it seems to me, required him to notify me of his change of mind and attitude towards me. He never at any time expressed any uneasiness about my health to me. Had he done so, his conduct would not seem so despicable. When I talked with him about his own race for the chairmanship of the caucus and mentioned to him that I wanted the committee on appropriations he advised me to say nothing about it and keep others guessing, which I did. It is this phase of the subject

which I do not understand. I would hate to believe there has been any understanding or any promises or pledges made. As I have no proof I must perforce leave my accusations unsaid. But I can not help the suspicion that there must have been a deal of some kind or Senator Martin would not have retired without a show down.

While I am no longer able to battle on the floor of the Senate and deliver philippics as I once did I am still able to give counsel and advice. I am still able to say "NO", and spell it with capitals, too, and that is what is needed on the committee on appropriations. I outlined in my letter to President Wilson my ideas as to why the appropriations have grown so rapidly and why so much money is being squandered needlessly. My ambition is as chairman of the committee on appropriations to bring into the Senate bills which have passed the House without increasing the amounts at all, and, if possible, to bring in the bills reducing them as they passed the House. I believe it is possible to do this. In fact, I know it, and if I am given help on the committee of young and willing men, earnestly striving for the same object, I will do it.

Then, Senators, contrast the way the Republicans treat their old men and the way ours are being treated. Senator Allison was kept chairman of the committee on appropriations as long as he was in the Senate, although in his last years he was very feeble. Senator Perkins, although far more feeble than I am, is still chairman of the committee on naval affairs. Senator Cullom, when he retired from the Senate on the fourth of March, was still chairman of the committee on foreign relations. They do not demote and discredit their old leaders because of age.

I have said more than once, and to more people than one, that if the wrong was not righted in the caucus I would carry it to the Senate itself, which, under Rule 24, must elect its committees. My idea in going to the Senate was to get into the Record, for preservation for the future historian, my vindication and defence, as it were. But when I considered the spectacle which I would present to the country by allowing my grievances against the party, however justified, to militate against that unity and harmony which ought to prevail among us, I decided that it was a selfish motive and I bade the devil get behind me.

Democratic harmony and concert of action are more necessary at this time than anythink I know of. Democratic discipline is also needed very, very much, for as compared with the Republicans we are an untrained mob with little knowledge of parliamentary law and very little effective knowledge of the rules of the Senate.

Yesterday one of the newspaper boys told me he had seen the two Georgia Senators in amicable conference in the restaurant. Immediately the thought flashed on my mind, if Bacon and Hoke Smith are friendly after what has happened why should Hoke Smith and Tillman fall out about it? I have already in the caucus, told Hoke Smith how I felt about Bacon's not getting the place of President pro tempore, and it was that indignation which prompted the interview with the correspondent of The Atlanta Constitution.

I used the word "Progressives" in that interview. The reporter changed it to "Conservatives", and when I hastily revised the interview, I did not note the change in the language. I do not feel that those Senators who brought about Bacon's defeat were conspirators at all. They merely expressed their preference as between the two men as they had a right to do. I know if they saw this interview they must have become angry, because it was unjust. I recognize that now, and desire to apologize to them for using the word in the interview. I also desire to apologize to Senator Hoke Smith for the way I have treated him.

My regret is more keen because I have since learned—only last night—that he was my friend on the steering committee and battled manfully to keep the rest from demoting me or giving Mr. Martin the chairmanship of appropriations.

Yesterday, when I was so hot, a reporter for a Georgia paper came into my room and said something about Bacon and Hoke Smith talking about Georgia patronage and expressed surprise that they should be speaking to each other. I told him I hoped Hoke Smith would never speak to me again; but I do not feel that way now. I am always ready and willing—nay, anxious—to make the amends honorable when I am in error, and that is my reason for speaking as I do.

The other day I said I loved the two Georgia Senators. I did not tell the exact truth. I do love Senator Bacon, and was beginning to like Hoke Smith very much. I hope I shall continue to like him, and will unless he gives me just reason not to. We have need in the Senate of brains, for we presented a sorry spectacle yesterday for lack of consultation among the leaders and concert of action. The party is so new in its role of conducting affairs that the people must make allowances. The new men are nearly all awkward and green, and unless they acquaint themselves thoroughly with the rules and precedents, they will be subjected to very many mortifications, and the party itself will become a laughing stock.