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RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

HON. A. C. LATIMER'S SPEECH IN CONGRESS.

He Opposes the Bill Placing Rural Delivery Service Under the Contract System. Delivered in the House of Representatives March 6th.

The House being in Committee, of the Whole, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 11728) to classify the rural free-delivery service and fix the compensation to employees thereof.

Mr. Chairman: During the ten years that I have been a member of this house, I have learned, in listening to the debates on the multitude of propositions that have been presented here, that there are gentlemen on this floor who can make a good argument on either side of a question.

I realize that there are two sides to most propositions which come up for discussion here. The varied interests and conditions of the country give rise to divergent views upon nearly every public question. But the argument and practical policy of the question before the house are so clearly on one side that I am at a loss to understand why there should be a difference of opinion in relation to it.

The great advantages derived by the people from the rural free-delivery system, I take it, are not in question in this discussion. We are all agreed upon the merits of the system, and it is upon a question of administration only that we disagree.

The leading points that have been made in favor of the bill placing the rural delivery service under the contract system are, first, that it will prove economical to the government and will equalize the compensation of the carriers, and, second, that it will largely remove the service from political influences.

As to the first proposition, it is a remarkable fact that where service is to be rendered in the country or rural districts the question of economy is always predominant; but we hear no complaint of the fact that in the cities the carriers of mail receive from \$800 to \$1,000 per annum for eight hours' service, nor do we hear the proponents of this bill complaining that the number of carriers for the cities has been doubled in order that the mail can be delivered from four to ten times a day to a population living within easy reach of the post office, the most remote being not more than half a mile away from the main post office or a substation, with street cars penetrating every section of the city, and beautifully paved streets to walk on in case exercise is desired. These highly favored fellow-citizens must have mail carriers who are exempt from the injurious contract system; lest the service be crippled, the question of economy not being considered; but it must be applied to the rural mail carrier, it matters not how much it will degrade and lower the standard of the service.

Why this discrimination in favor of the cities? Can it be successfully contended that the city can not be laid off in routes as clearly defined as those in the country, or that the city service requires superior fitness or qualities not required in the rural carrier? There can be no force in the first proposition, and it is well known that the city carrier is not required to register letters, handle receipts for the same, or sell stamps and envelopes, all of which the rural carrier is required to do. If you will examine the question you will find that the carrier on rural routes has much greater responsibilities than the carrier on the city routes. He is in fact a traveling post office, and if a discrimination is to be made it should be in his favor. Besides, the city carrier does not have to undergo the hardship of exposure to rain, sleet, snow, mud, and all kinds of weather. Many of the large buildings in New York and Chicago, as stated by the gentleman from Illinois, require four and five carriers to deliver the mail to the occupants. Is it to be contended that these carriers who ride on elevators in comfortable buildings shall be exempt from the contract system and allowed

to draw from \$800 to \$1,000 per annum, while the rural carrier, with greater responsibilities and compelled to undergo exposure to all kinds of weather, is to be ground down to the lowest price which a competitive bid will force?

If economy is your object—and you contend that millions of dollars will be saved annually to the government by the contract system—why put the \$7,000,000 paid the rural carrier under the contract system, and at the same time squander over seventeen millions to the city carrier under the salary system? I will go farther and say. If the contract system will result in as good service and a saving of millions in the rural free delivery service, why do you not frame a bill and pass it putting the Railway Mail Service and the postmasters throughout the country under the same economical system? You could easily have all applicants who pass an examination submit bids for the service by contract, and let it go to the lowest responsible bidder.

Your answer that the law now provides for salaries to the city carrier, the railway mail clerk, and the postmasters, and that you are not now dealing with that problem, is no answer. The postoffice and post roads committee has the right and power to frame a bill and present to this house providing for the repeal of existing law, and it is to be said that where inequalities exist, where a useless waste of public money can be prevented by a change in the law, that this body which created the law is to stand in awe of an act because it protects a certain favored class and gives to the city carrier, railway mail clerk, and postmasters a salary system at a loss of millions to the government? Will you refuse to repeal the law, and at the same time strike down the rural carrier to a competitive bid basis, a contract system which has never given satisfaction to the people after a fair trial, upon the false and specious plea of economy? If economy is what we are after, let us be consistent; let us commence at the beginning and carry it all along through the service of the government.

Mr. Chairman, the chairman of the committee [Mr. Loud] has opposed in the past many needed reforms in the postal service and stood, as he stands today, in opposition to the policies advocated by the postoffice department, as well as by many of the best informed men on postal matters in the country. I remember in the last congress when I offered an amendment to the postoffice bill, providing that all towns should have free delivery, he opposed the amendment, and it was ruled out on a point of order. I then appealed to him to report a bill, giving the house an opportunity to do justice to more than 20,000,000 of our people who live in towns without free delivery service. I stated to him that the cities above 10,000 inhabitants had free delivery and the country had rural delivery, and that the house ought to have an opportunity to do tardy justice to the towns; but he and his committee refused to take any steps in that direction.

We tried last session to amend the star route service by requiring the contractor to live on the route, and in that way remedy the evil that existed in that service, but the amendment was ruled out on a point of order made by the chairman of the committee, who was against the amendment. The postoffice department, however, realizing the miserable service that the rural districts had to endure by reason of the subcontracting system, issued an order to the effect that all new contracts in the star route service should be let to residents on the route. This reform, which was resisted by the chairman of the committee, has been endorsed by him today. So we may expect to find the honorable gentleman contending against the contract system one year from now. His recommendation of this so-called reform, therefore, loses much of its force and effect when viewed in the light of his mistakes of the past.

Again, it has been contended by the advocates of the bill that the

length of the routes are not uniform; that the roads vary from level, macadamized, to hilly, mountainous, and muddy roads, and that, therefore, the contract system is the only just and equitable one. In reply to this contention, I will state what every member knows to be true, that on many of the worst roads to be traveled the anxious bidder, under the contract system, will, in his anxiety for the contract, do as has been done in the star-route service, submit a bid much below the amount paid for service over better roads and for less than the service will actually cost. It may be said that that is the contractor's fault. But that will not equalize the service; nor better it, surely. Must we have economy at the cost of total ruin and destruction of the service? Is such a proposition worthy of the name of economy? A better plan than that proposed by this bill would be to pay all carriers \$25 per mile, and a certain per cent additional in all cases where the roads to be traveled are of such nature as to make the additional per cent equitable, the route agent or inspector being required to report on the condition of the road.

This plan will pay the carrier on a route of 24 miles \$600, which is adequate, and will, in addition, guarantee good service in every community. But I contend that the per cent for bad roads is not so necessary as would appear at first glance, for the reason that \$25 per mile will not, as a rule, be more compensation to the carrier who travels good roads than it will be to the carrier who travels rough roads. The opportunities to make money and to save money will about equalize the difference in the condition of the roads; that is to say, the carrier who travels good roads, the community being populous, living will be higher and expenses greater, while, on the other hand, his opportunity to make a dollar will be greater; whereas the carrier on bad roads will be able to live for less, his expenses will be less, and his money will buy more in his thinly settled community.

As to the political phase of this proposition, I fail to see much difference between the two systems. The party in power can use either for political purposes, and if the Republican administration uses it we will have the same privilege when we come into power. I have never heard of any system, the civil service included, that could not be manipulated in the interest of the party in power. I remember discussing the civil service with an officer of the government who had taken charge of a bureau of one of the departments. I said to him: "Suppose you had a chief of division or a clerk in your bureau who was objectionable to you, what could you do under the rules of the civil service, while he performed efficient service, to rid yourself of him?" He replied that it would be easy to abolish the office held by the objectionable person, and after he was out re-establish it.

I unhesitatingly state that if I was in charge of any department of this government, with the responsibility of good administration resting on me, I would want employees in full accord and harmony with me, and would certainly feel kindly, therefore, to the adherents of the party to which I belong. If it seems desirable, the party in power can manipulate the offices under any system. This we might as well concede now. The rural service under the salary system is about as free, and more so, perhaps, from political manipulation as any other service of the government. I desire to say that every appointee in my district, some seventy-odd, who is engaged in delivering the mail on rural routes, has been appointed upon my recommendation, and every one of them, so far as I know, is a Democrat, and I presume those who will be appointed there to complete the service will be Democrats.

But you Democratic members in close districts, who have not been so well treated, and have had no voice in naming the carriers, how can you

improve that condition under the contract system? The special agent, under that system, will pass upon or examine the bids and recommend which bid shall be accepted, and the department will have the right of selection. Both plans, I believe, are equally capable of being used for political purposes, if so desired. The recent order requiring all applicants for carrier's position to stand an examination removes the service as far from political influence as is possible under any system.

Then the question is narrowed down to this one proposition—the best service at the lowest price, everything being considered. I am, therefore, against this bill, and in my judgment we will accomplish the best results by passing the appropriation for the rural delivery service just as we do for the city delivery service, in a lump sum and without restriction, leaving to the department the task of working out the details along lines suggested by experience and a wide knowledge of postal affairs. The department has developed the service to its present high state of usefulness to the general satisfaction of the country and a large majority of this house, and I have heard no sound reason for a change except upon the ground of economy and freedom from political influence, both of which arguments have been fully answered and left without force in this discussion.

Let me, in conclusion, appeal to the friends of rural free delivery to stand in solid phalanx against this bill, and every other proposition brought in here by the enemies of the service. This appeal is made on behalf of millions of our people who live on farms or follow other avocations away from the mail advantages of towns and cities. Before the establishment of rural delivery these people rarely received mail more than once or twice a week, and were, consequently, practically cut off from knowledge of and interest in the affairs of the world. Only those who have led the life of a farmer in the thinly settled communities of this country can properly appreciate the great blessing that this service is to the country people.

I beg you not to cripple it by any false notions of economy. The farmer who was wont to labor in the fields day in and day out and go home at night to his frugal meal and lonely fireside, with nothing to relieve the monotony of existence save, perhaps, the occasional visit of a friend from the neighboring farm, is now taking a daily paper, which is delivered at his door, and after his work is over he reads it and keeps abreast of the times. He has thrown off the lethargy of isolation and taken on the spirit of progress and improvement. He receives daily reports from the markets, and knows when and where to send his produce for sale; he introduces new methods in his work, which redness labor and expense; he diversifies his crops according to the demands of the market, and he takes a lively interest in the public questions of the day. He is, in short, an up-to-date American citizen, broadening and expanding in productive power and intellectual force, and it is but just to say that the system of bringing to him his mail daily has been a great step in the accomplishment of this wonderful change. Let us not take from the country people the one boon that the government has given them directly; but let us foster it and improve it; so that it will meet the growing needs of the hour, and in building up the country people build up every other occupation and branch of industry.

LETTER FROM SENATOR TILLMAN.
He Explains His Remarks Made in His Apology to the Senate.

[Greenwood Journal, 11th.]

Senator Tillman has been severely criticised by the press and individuals from one end of the country to the other in reference to the language he used in his apology to the Senate. While his friends could not clearly understand his meaning when he said that having been governor of South Carolina had unfitted him in

a measure to conform to the rules of a high deliberative body, such as the Senate of the United States, they were confident that he could not have intended any reflection upon the office of governor of this State or its people. For this reason Mr. D. H. Magill wrote him to explain and the senator replied in the following letter:

United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.,
March 4, 1902.
Hon. D. H. Magill, Greenwood,
S. C.

Dear Sir:—I have your kind letter of March, 1st. In reference to the expression used by me in my apology to the Senate, that "My previous service as Governor of South Carolina for four years had unfitted me in a measure to enter this august assembly, with the dignity and regard—proper regard—I will say, for its traditions and habits and rules that is desirable." I would say that the only reasonable construction to put on the words, and my meaning was that when I was governor it was my business to handle problems, many of them very important and without consulting any one, and act entirely on my own responsibility, and the habit of mind which naturally resulted, from that manner of thought and action, and the work as executive, unfitted me in a measure for service here. None but a gangrened imagination, or some one anxious to misconstrue, will think that I meant that a governor of South Carolina can not be dignified and act with decency and courtesy on all occasions. Things are so different in the Senate that I have never yet become used to them.

While I am writing, I wish to say that my action here was a necessity, and while I regret as much as any one that circumstances were of a nature, so I had no alternative but to strike my colleague, I believe my action meets with the approval of a large majority of the Democrats in the House and Senate. Not that they approve the giving of a blow in the Senate, but they think there was nothing else to do, and had I taken the lie my own self-respect would have been gone, and my service here in the future of no effect.

So then, I have but one comment to make in answer to newspaper criticisms published in South Carolina. It does look hard, that when I am making the best fight I can against the Republicans here, and acting in the capacity of one of the fighters in the Senate, delegated by the Democratic side to answer the strongest Republican, Senator Spooner, on a party question, that some of my own people, Democrats in reality or apparently, should stab me in the back, while I am engaged all along the line in front by Republicans. It however demonstrates the fact that there are some in South Carolina, who are anti Tillmanites, first and Democrats afterwards and will seize on any and every thing to give me a stab. We will let that pass though, and I will go back to my people feeling, as I have felt for a long while that I have the respect and support of a large majority of them and for those who are so narrow and prejudiced as to be unable to see any good in any thing that I do, I feel only contempt and pity.

The dinner incident was not of my making and in that I have no doubt as to the sentiment of the folks at home. The statement has been made that it was an official dinner. This is untrue because Pierpont Morgan, Robt. Lincoln and ten or fifteen other private citizens were invited. The invitation to me came unsought. I had no special desire to attend the function but before I had any notice whatever that it was desired that my acceptance be withdrawn the whole thing was ventilated in the morning papers, and I was thus notified publicly that the President was trying to punish a Senator, before the Senate had taken action. Had the President sent a mutual friend, in a quiet way suggesting that it would be an awkward situation, any man who knows me at all, knows how quickly I would have relieved him of his embarrassment.

Thanking you for your kind letter and with good wishes,
Yours sincerely,
B. R. Tillman.

IS IT WARREN'S BODY, OR IS IT A FAKE?

PARTLY DECOMPOSED CORPSE FOUND IN EDISTO RIVER.

Near Scene of Train Robbery—Envelopes and Weapons Indicate That It Is the Bold Express Robber But Proof Is Yet Lacking.

[Special to The State.]

Orangeburg, March 14.—The fully-dressed body of a white man was found today in the Edisto river below Branchville, one-quarter of a mile from where the safe was recently left by robbers. On his person were found a number of addressed express envelopes and two money bags with money in them. Two pistols were buckled to the body and a cartridge belt with cartridges in it. Bartow Warren's friends who have seen the body say they think it is his.

THE DESCRIPTION.

The body described is that of a man of a medium size, 5 feet 8 inches tall, fully dressed and well dressed. The whole body is slightly decomposed, the face not being recognizable. The man had a full set of good teeth except that one of the upper front teeth is gold filled. He had a full beard. Of the express envelopes, one was addressed to J. Warren Stratton, Athens, Ga.; one to D. M. Degolia, Augusta, Ga.; one to Booth & Batman, Athens, Ga.; and there was some kind of package addressed to C. D. Dukes, Peggall's, S. C. There were two pistols, one a Smith & Wesson, five-inch barrel, the other a 38-calibre Colt's, six inch barrel. He had a cheap Ansonia watch. There were two money bags found in his pockets and each contained some money. This money was not described.

The body was found by Cornelius Ott at Minus' landing, Colleton county. There is a difference of opinion as to the exact point where the body was found, whether it was below or above the spot where the safe was dumped into the river, but the best opinion is that it was one-quarter of a mile below. Those who know Warren say that from the articles found upon the body the indications are all that it is Bartow Warren. The teeth, they say, indicate that it is Bartow Warren.

A very close inspection of the body and papers has not yet been made, as it was pulled from the river on the Colleton side and left on the bank, where it will have to wait the arrival of the coroner of that county. There were no evidences of death from wounds of any kind. The dates on the postmarks of the letters and packages that could be deciphered was Jan. 27, the night of the hold-up of the Southern train, and the taking away of the express safe.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

[Special to The State.]

Branchville, March 14.—The body of a man—supposed to be that of Bartow Warren—was found floating in Edisto river this morning about a quarter of a mile below where the express safe was thrown in the river some time ago.

The body is badly decomposed and up to this time has not been positively identified.

There were a shell belt and two pistols buckled around the body. There were express envelopes in the man's pockets, but they have not been examined yet. The coroner of Colleton county has been notified and will probably hold the inquest tomorrow morning.

One eye and half of the side of the face are gone. The body measures 5 feet 8 inches; the shoe is number six, the hand resembles that of a woman. There is a gold filling in one tooth. A belt around the body contains two 38-calibre, 6-inch barrel pistols and he wore one cheap nickel watch, showing time 8:45. Blue coat and vest and dark check pants are the attire.

On account of the decomposition of the body it could not be positively identified, but from what parties say it is almost certain that it is the body of Bartow Warren. If not Warren it is almost certain that it is the body of one of the men connected with the

express robbery near Fifty-eight on the night of January 27th. The inquest has not been held and a guard will be left with the body until the coroner arrives.

There are several express envelopes found on the body containing some money but the amount is not known.

The most reasonable theory advanced is that in crossing the river after dumping the safe, the robber, weighted by the heavy pistols and cartridges was drowned.

McLAURIN ALONE FAVORS SUBSIDY.

Rest of South Carolina Delegation Opposes the Bill.

[Special to Charleston Post.]

Washington, March 14.—With one exception the entire South Carolina delegation are opposed to the subsidy bill. Friends of Senator McLaurin say that he will probably, vote for the bill, but the senator has not taken the floor in the senate upon the measure. All the remainder of the delegation are opposed to the bill, and will so vote when the proper time comes. Senator Tillman has spoken against the bill, and some of the members of the delegation intend speaking against it when the bill reaches the house of representatives.

There is no doubt but the bill will go through the senate, and in all probability the vote of Senator McLaurin will be the only vote it receive from the Democrats—if the senator votes for it. Under the agreement given last week the vote will be taken Monday afternoon.

The Georgia, and other Southern senators, are solid against the bill. Of the speeches which has been delivered thus far, those of Senator Clay, of Georgia, and Senator Malloy, of Florida, have been the most thorough, both senators having given the question the most thorough consideration. The speech of Senator Clay has been extensively commented upon by the Republican senators who have spoken in support of the bill. It is conceded by the Republicans that the speech of the Georgia senator was most exhaustive, and that the senator showed that he was thoroughly conversant with the question at issue.

MARSHAL MELTON'S TERM.

Expired, But He Will Serve Until His Successor Qualifies.

The term of the United States Marshal Lawson D. Melton expired recently but according to the rule of the department, the incumbent will continue to serve until his successor is appointed and qualifies.

The law was formerly that the marshal was appointed for four years only, the term expiring on the date, but it was amended since Marshal Melton was appointed and he will consequently serve until his successor is appointed.

Col. Melton is a candidate for re-appointment. A hard fight is however being made against him at Washington. A number of candidates are out for the place, as has been stated, and it remains to be seen to whom will fall the plum.

HOME FROM THE PHILIPPINES.

Mr. Allan Gray Returns to Columbia from Aparri.

Columbia, March 14.—Allan Gray, the gallant Columbia boy who was one of the first up South Juan hill, in Cuba, and has been since serving in the Philippines in the regular army, has returned to Columbia, having recently been mustered out of service. While at Aparri young Gray published the Aparri News, an army paper, which attracted considerable attention.

McLAURIN GETS A HORSE

Sent by South Carolina Friends—To Name Him McKinley.

Washington, March 14.—A horse which was presented to Senator McLaurin by some of his South Carolina admirers, arrived in Washington this morning. The senator says he may name him "McKinley."