

Starting Official Corruption.

U. S. Marshals and Deputy Marshals and their Deputies.

Conjured up Cases, Fat Feet and Multiple Mileage.

Deputy Marshals Thieves and Murderers.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30.—The complications relating to the question of confirming Attorney-General Williams, have called attention to three reports made in regard to the condition of affairs in the U. S. Marshal's office of the Western District of Arkansas made to the Attorney General in January and February and October of the present year. The reports were made by H. C. Whitney, Chief of the Secret Service Force, based on the results of an investigation made by L. B. Whitney, of that force, and extending to the first of August last. The first report received at the Department of Justice, January 20th, last, sets forth that A. M. A. Britton, United States Marshal, had serving under him 140 deputy marshals, who derived their support from the fees they could collect, and that it was to the interest of the United States to make an effort to make all the cases possible, and that they were allowed to roam over the country at will, and that one third of all the fees obtained were retained by the Chief Marshal, besides ten per cent. of all receipts from fees collected. The second report, dated February 1st, last, showed that the United States Marshal, A. M. A. Britton, had received from the United States district judge, at a discount of fifty per cent. Col. Whitney attended court, and reported that the cases were for the most part of a trivial character, and yet all local and charged for as cases before the court.

An abstract of the expenditures of the District Court named two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and that the United States Marshal, A. M. A. Britton, had received from the United States district judge, at a discount of fifty per cent. Col. Whitney attended court, and reported that the cases were for the most part of a trivial character, and yet all local and charged for as cases before the court.

Of 150 confined in jail, over half were discharged when the court met, because there was no cause against them. The U. S. Commissioner was in the habit of issuing and dating back warrants of the deputy marshals who had been to the Indian country.

A case in which an Indian woman brought from Chicago, September, and the warrant dated back to the 24th. The woman was arrested on the statement of a negro that she had stolen cattle. After commitment one day, she was discharged the next, because there was no evidence; and full mileage, subsistence, and posse's fees were paid.

Britton said to the Marshal that he could not allow over \$35 in any case, but the Marshal was urged to take any one against whom there was the slightest charge, and bring them into Fort Smith without warrant, and they could get the latter without any trouble. When they came in with a large lot of prisoners they were allowed by the Marshal to get other deputies to make arrests, and thus multiply fees. The commissioners who made out these extra papers were allowed ten per cent. on fees for filing up blanks and swearing to them. In one case 900 miles were allowed where the distance actually traveled was less than 200.

Those who made up the papers were publicly known as relatives of the Marshal. The report gives the ring at Fort Smith, engaged in these fraudulent practices. The United States Commissioner Brooke, Postmaster J. G. Scott, J. W. Donnelly, Marshal's clerk, and H. A. Pierce, editor of the "Arkansas Democrat," are named as the first report closes by recommending that the department refuse to pay all claims of Deputy Marshals, accounts and posse fees till a full judicial investigation can be had, on the ground that not one in ten are entitled to one-third of the amount charged, and in many cases whose cases are fabrications.

When the report reached Washington, Britton's name was pending before the Senate for confirmation, he having been re-appointed during the recess the previous summer, at the instance of Senator Clayton. His name was not withdrawn, nor was any investigation of the facts made. Next month, however, the Senate rejected him. On the 10th of January a second report reached the Department of Justice from the same official source setting forth that further investigation had developed the fact that Judge Scott, by Donnelly, when the money came from Washington, Britton turned it over to Donnelly, and the latter passed it to Scott's attorney, Philip Craig.

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