

THE LEXOW COMMITTEE.

Father Ducey was Absent from an Important Session.

This Was the Result of His Meeting with Archbishop Corrigan.

More Evidence of the Amount of Police Corruption in New York.

New York, Dec. 18.—When the Lexow committee met today Father Ducey's absence was noted. It was said to be the result of his cordial meeting with Archbishop Corrigan yesterday.

In opening, Senator Lexow said he had been officially informed that the suspension of Capt. Creedon by the police board had been moved.

Capt. Strauss was the first witness of the day. He testified that neither he nor his wife had a bank account. He also said there were no real estate mortgages in his wife's name.

John W. Rappengam, the man who handed Captain Creedon \$15,000, was the next witness and reiterated his testimony of Friday to the effect that he had given him a check for \$15,000 and that Martin knew he had this check.

Oscar R. Coughlin, general agent of the French Steamship company, was the first witness after recess today. "What do you know of the attempt made to get hold of the books of your company, in which an entry of \$500 paid to Captain Schmittberger was made?"

"Mr. Wolfe, representing Captain Schmittberger, came to me and said that the captain would appear before this committee, and that they were trying to collect the evidence they could. He asked if the French company had not paid Captain Schmittberger \$500. After an investigation I found that this was so."

"Well, was any offer made to pay this back?"

"Yes, Wolfe came to me and told me if I would accept it he would pay back the \$500 and something in addition in order to have the company refuse to turn their books over to this committee."

"What was the sum mentioned in this connection?"

"I do not know, but have heard that it was \$1,000 in addition to the \$500."

Officers Brady, McGeorge, Connors, Murphy and Moran testified that they had been paid for dock work, and that under Captains Seely, Schmittberger and Gastlin they had to give up half of this money.

Ex-Wardman Bell, who served under Captain Gastlin, was the next witness. "I believe you will not deny that you collected the money from these officers?"

"No."

"Did you give it to?"

"Captain Gastlin."

"And did you ever collect any for Captain Schmittberger?"

"No."

Witness then said that when Captain Schmittberger first assumed charge of the steamboat squad, he wanted the men to turn over all the extra money to him. Some of the men agreed to do this but others objected.

"What money did you ever collect for Schmittberger?"

"I collected \$50 from a General Townsend of the Pennsylvania line. I also went to Hoboken once and got some money from one of the ferry lines."

"How much?"

"Fifty dollars."

"How much did you collect for Captain Schmittberger during the first month he was in the squad?"

"\$210."

"That was the regular monthly collection?"

"Yes."

Sergeant Taylor, another collector, testified he collected about \$300 per month during Schmittberger's term.

"What did you do with this money?"

"I paid the most of it to Inspector Steers at police headquarters."

A buzz went round the court at this answer.

"What became of the other portion?"

"I kept it."

"And how often did you go there?"

"Every month."

"And why did you pay this to him?"

"Because he ordered me to do so."

"How much did you pay to Inspector Steers?"

"Eighty per cent."

"And you took 20 per cent?"

"Yes."

"After Schmittberger left there, and you took charge, did you continue to divide with Steers?"

"Yes."

"When Captain Allair took charge what did you do with the money you collected?"

"Well, I put it in an envelope and laid it in the desk in the station house and never saw it any more. I wrote on the envelope 'street cleaning reports,' and left it on the sergeant's desk."

"Did you continue to put the envelopes on the desk after McAvoy came in?"

"Yes."

"Well, to whom were you responsible for the collection of this money?"

"I don't know; I merely continued as I had been doing."

Dr. Joel Wilson Wright, who is in attendance on "Honest" John Martin to whom Rappengam gave the \$10,000 to secure the appointment of Captain Creedon, testified that Martin was seriously ill; that he could not move without assistance; that his affliction was paralysis on the left side. The doctor was indignant over his summons to appear before the committee.

Sergeant Taylor was re-called and asked who he thought got the money. He did not know; probably Inspector Steers, or the man who replaced him.

John Blenis said that before the last election he was employed by Alderman Benjamin to buy votes at \$1 a head and to furnish the men with democratic posters. Instead he paid them \$2 each out of Alderman Benjamin's money and gave them republican posters, and all of them voted them. More than 100 had been paid for the purpose, but he never got a penny for his work.

Samuel Rothbuck, who was then called, swore that the same alderman had given him \$2 and a poster and told him to vote it. Rothbuck took the money, but did not vote the poster. The witness then went on to state that the alderman gave him another \$2 and a poster and again told him to vote it. He did not do so, but an hour later he returned for a third time, got another \$2 and a poster and finally voted the straight republican ticket.

Mr. Goff stated that in his opinion the matter should be brought to the attention of the district attorney. Chairman Lexow ordered that this be done.

New York, Dec. 18.—Supt. Byrnes figured conspicuously in the testimony of two witnesses before the Lexow committee today. John Marrett, formerly an agent of the society for the Protection of Crime, testified that Supt. Byrnes had bullied him, with threats and force into divulging the secrets of his society, and had afterwards relented when he heard that the witness was a brother mason.

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