

# REED SMOOT, AN 'ADDING MACHINE IN BREECHES,' SERVES IN SENATE AS 'STOREKEEPER OF THE U.S.'

### Forthcoming Chairman of Finance Committee, a Tall Man With a Misfit Stride, Towers Over Colleagues but Proves No Leader on Senate Floor

### LACKS AGGRESSION, CAN'T 'MIX,' HAS FEW FOLLOWERS BUT KNOWS HIS LIMITS

### Too Busy Fighting Waste to Go to Dinners, He Spends His Time With Figures on Tariffs and Taxes—Had Stormy Introduction to Congress

By CLINTON W. GILBERT

There is a certain incongruity about Senator Reed Smoot who, on the fourth of next March, will succeed Senator McCumber as chairman of the most important committee of the Senate, that on Finance. He is a very tall man whose stride does not fit him. Six feet three or four in height he steps like a man five feet three or four. His height in a way symbolizes his extraordinary grasp of the Nation's business. When it comes to figures he towers above any one else in the Senate. His little stride shows itself when he presents them on the floor of the Senate.

Smoot is no debater. Inferior men with less knowledge talk him down. They have more aggressiveness and more art. Moreover, he has no followers. In no sense of the word is he a leader. He is no mixer with his fellows. The recent tariff discussion left him cordially detested. I asked a man who knows him well why.

"Well," he said, "if any one puts in a bill to bridge a creek, Smoot immediately jumps to his feet and says that the bridge should be fifty feet further up the creek or fifty feet further down it. He moves an amendment and he produces a mass of figures to show why the bridge should not be where the Senator wants it. A good fellow lets his colleagues have their bridges where they will."

Now, it was so with the Tariff Bill. Smoot had his own ideas about every schedule in that bill. He was not content to write the schedules he was chiefly interested in. He wanted to rewrite the schedules everybody else was interested in. And he had a heap of facts and figures to show why he should rewrite them.

The bill would probably have been a better bill if he had rewritten the whole of it. But a kind of senatorial courtesy requires you to keep off the other fellow's pet schedules. That is one reason. There is another. A man who saw Smoot for the first time the other day said to me: "He reminds me walking about the Senate floor of a Sunday School librarian delivering books to scholars during the lesson." Oddly enough, every one seeking a comparison for Smoot resorts to the church. "A deacon," "a village elder" are the commonest phrases. Now deacons are all right in their places, but we like them better in church than out of church. A little worldliness would do Smoot good. You can not imagine a greater contrast to Penrose than the man who will soon take his old place.

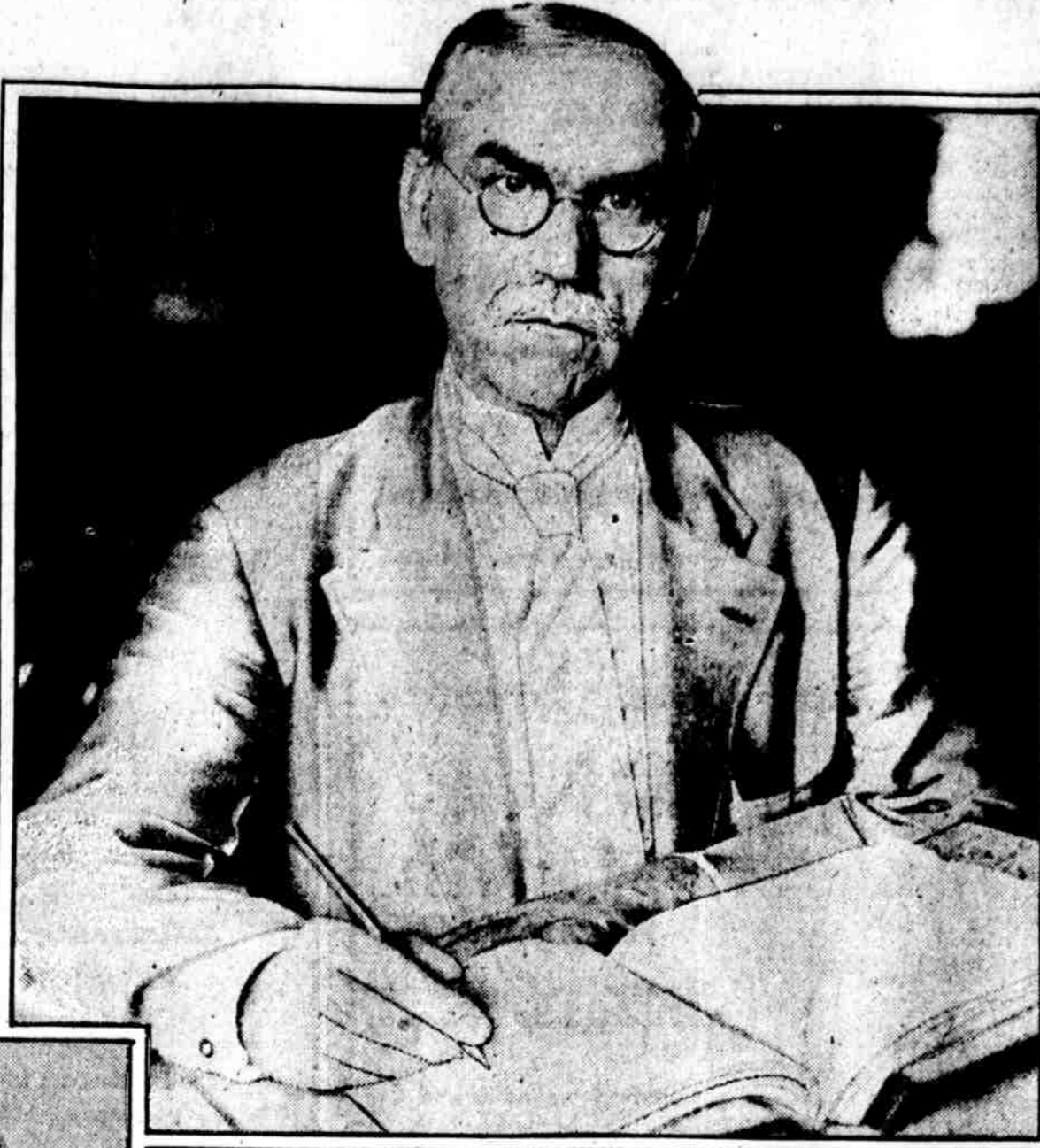
### Adding Machine in Breeches Without a Sense of Humor

The Senator from Utah has a sense of sin in public that he never quite forgets. The sin that troubles him most is waste. Every dollar that goes astray weighs on his conscience. And as he speaks with a certain querulous note in his voice of the needless expenditures on white paper, on leaves to print, on unread reports. You know that he is a prophet who knows that his lamentations fall on ears that are not only deaf, but slightly resentful.

When you try to give human interest to a picture of Smoot you encounter difficulties. There are no stories about Smoot. First, this is because he has no sense of humor and second because he is an adding machine in breeches. It is hard to give human interest to an adding machine in breeches.

A picture of Senator Smoot's day is this: He rises early and begins to work on figures. He goes to the Senate and springs figures at frequent intervals upon his associates in debate. He goes home to dinner and settles down to a night's work on figures. He does not belong to the dining-out set in the Senate. He goes to White House dinners and to dinners of some Cabinet members. He invites few to his house. He had the President there recently, but no one else.

You will observe that he does not waste time. And it is only by wasting time that you have good stories about you and become humanly interesting. He hates waste of time or money in most of his late industry. Now he is going to defend waste as a form of economy. Smoot would be a



Reed Smoot, United States Senator from Utah



Mrs. Annie R. Rebentisch, daughter of the Senator, who was considered among the beautiful young women of the capital at the time of her debut



Mrs. Chloe Cardon, another of the Utah Senator's daughters



The Senior Senator from Utah enjoys an idle moment with a pet

### Nation-Wide Protests Greeted His Candidacy

Senator Smoot's long and busy service in the Senate began inauspiciously. When his name was first hinted at as a candidate, more than twenty years ago, a howl went up the country over. It was charged that there had been a "dicker" with the Mormon Church, by which it was to return a Republican majority in Utah in return for a seat in the Senate. Reed Smoot, a Mormon and the son of a polygamist Mormon, was called the representative of Mormonism, and his possible election to senatorial honors the first step in spreading the propaganda of the Latter-day Saints broadcast across the country.

From the start the protest against the election of Smoot was based on the proposition that "he is one of a self-perpetuating body of fifteen men, who constitute the ruling authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormon Church, claim, and, by their followers, are accorded the right to claim, supreme authority divinely sanctioned, to shape the belief and control the conduct of those under them in all matters whatsoever, civil and religious, temporal and spiritual. And we do further protest that the beliefs, conduct, teachings and practices in respect to the matters herein complained of ever have been and now are: "First, contrary to the public sentiment of the civilized world; second, contrary to expressed pledges given in securing amnesty; third, contrary to expressed conditions upon which ecclesiastical church property was returned; fourth, contrary to pledges given by the representatives of the Church and the Ter-

### He'll Have His Troubles Putting Sales Tax Through

But simplification of taxes is something we talk about but never accomplish. The motto of Legislatures in taxation is, "Let sleeping dogs be." New taxes always seem

expert approved and O. K.'d it. To be twice as sure he had Secretary McAdoo's best expert examine his return. He, too, O. K.'d it. A little while ago from the Treasury Department came the demand for \$3000 more taxes on the ground that the return was wrong. Mr. Smoot told the Treasury Department to sue him if it would. But he thinks a tax law which presents so many difficulties that the two best experts could not make a return which would withstand further questioning causes an immense waste of time.

Recently a big mining company from the West had its president and chief officials and a corps of experts in Washington for ten days making out its return in consultation with the Treasury Department. Probably they had worked on it for days before they came to Washington. That in Smoot's eyes is a terrible waste of time.

Mr. Smoot's crusade is for a tax so simple that the biggest corporation could make its return on a single sheet of paper and have it correct. This is one argument for the sales tax. Another is that one tax would be substituted for a multitude of taxes.

### Committee for Dismissal Overruled by the Senate

After three years of investigation the committee reported voluminously, citing passages from the testimony of witnesses dealing for the most part with the tenets and practices of the Mormon Church.

"The more deliberately and carefully the testimony taken in the investigation is considered," said the committee report, "the more irresistibly it leads to the conclusion that the facts stated in the report are true. That Mr. Smoot is one of a self-perpetuating body of men, known as the first church and twelve apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church; that these men claim Divine authority to control the members of said church in all things, temporal as well as spiritual; that this authority is, and has been for several years past, so exercised by the said first presidency and twelve apostles as to encourage the practice of polygamy in the State of Utah and elsewhere, contrary to the Constitution and laws of the State of Utah and the law of the land; that the said first presidency and twelve apostles do now control, and for a long time past have controlled, the political affairs of the church and State, and have thus brought about a union of church and State, contrary to the Constitution of said State of Utah and contrary to the Constitution of the United States, and that said Reed Smoot comes here, not as the accredited representative of the State of Utah in the Senate of the United States, but as a choice of the hierarchy which controls the church and has usurped the functions of the State in said State of Utah.

"It follows, as a necessary conclusion from these facts, that Mr. Smoot is not entitled to a seat in the Senate as a Senator from the State of Utah, and your committee reports the following resolution:

"Resolved, That Reed Smoot is not entitled to a seat as a Senator of the United States from the State of Utah." The committee had turned its thumbs down—Reed Smoot, after three years.

Smoot became a member of the committee in 1919, roughly six years after his stormy election to the Senate. He had been "digging in" during those years, familiarizing himself with every aspect of trade and tariff. His aid proved to be invaluable. He was one of the framers of the Aldrich tariff measure, and stood in the breach to defend it even when Senator Aldrich himself seemed hard pressed for arguments.

### Senate Begins an Inquiry After Smoot Is Sworn In

The next move was on March 5, 1920, when Mr. Smoot took his oath of office as Senator from Utah. As on his previous appearance with his credentials, a petition was presented in the Senate from certain citizens of Utah, praying that an investigation be made by the Senate to determine his right to his seat.

It was pointed out that "whereas the credentials of his due election from the executive of his State are entitled to be sworn in, and that all questions should be postponed and acted upon by the Senate afterward."

He was sworn in, therefore, and January 27, 1920, when a resolution was passed referring his credentials and the

### Biographical.

UTAH.  
(Population 1920, 419,396.)

#### SENATORS.

REED SMOOT, Republican, of Provo City, was born January 10, 1862, at Salt Lake City, Utah; was educated at the State University and Brigham Young Academy, being a graduate of the latter institution; is a banker and woolen manufacturer; married September 17, 1884, to Alpha M. Eldredge; and took his seat March 6, 1903, in the Senate to succeed Joseph L. Rawlins, Democrat, and took his seat March 6, 1903; was reelected by the unanimous Republican vote of the Utah State Legislature for a second term of six years to begin March 4, 1909. Was reelected for a third term by the direct vote of the people. Was reelected November 2, 1920, for a fourth term.

WILLIAM H. KING, Democrat, of Salt Lake City, was born in Utah, attended the public schools, the B. Y. U. and

### more effective man if he knew how to waste his time profitably, as let us say, Senator Penrose did. But there he is, a slightly incongruous figure as I said in the beginning.

### May Succeed to Job Once Held by Brigham Young

Back in the ancient days when he came to Washington he was the first Mormon Senator. He is an elder of the church and some day may succeed to the job Brigham Young had as its president. When the first Mormon Senator arrived it was thought to be an auspicious moment to investigate how many wives Mormons had. The Senate investigated at length, bringing out many stories about plurality of wives in the sect, but nothing but the most unexceptional monogamy could they discover about Smoot. Wives in large numbers use up time and money. Now that one knows Smoot well, you can not conceive of so perfect an economist as he exceeding the New Testament allowance of women.

I think I have written enough to indicate a man highly conscientious, passionately industrious, deeply religious, somewhat of a political kill-joy, who does not let friendship or that courtesy which prevails among Senators interfere with his pursuit of waste everywhere and under all circumstances.

### Senate Finance Committees Headed by Noted Men in Past

THE Senate Finance Committee did not exist as such prior to the Fourteenth Congress. Select committees had been used in considering matters before standing committees became the order of procedure. For several years the records are not definite as to who was chairman, but in each instance the presumption of authorities on such matters gives the place to the man first named.

- In the Fourteenth Congress the first chairman of a finance committee was appointed. This was December 11, 1815, and the man was George W. Campbell (Democrat, Tennessee), who served as chairman in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Congresses. The other chairmen have been:
- Sixteenth Congress—Nathan Sanford (Dem., New York).
- Seventeenth, first session—John Holcomb (Dem., Maine).
- Seventeenth, second session—Walter Loring (Whig, unknown, Pa.).
- Eighteenth to twenty-second Congresses—Samuel Smith (Dem., Maryland).
- Twenty-third to first session of Twenty-fourth—Daniel Webster (Mass.).
- Twenty-fourth, second session through Twenty-sixth—Siler Wright, Jr. (Dem., New York).
- Twenty-seventh, first session—Henry Clay (Whig, Kentucky).
- Twenty-seventh, second, through Twenty-eighth—George Evans (Whig, Me.).
- Twenty-ninth—Dixon H. Lewis (Dem., Alabama).
- Thirtieth—Charles G. Atherton (Dem., New Hampshire).
- Thirty-first, first session—Daniel S. Dickinson (Dem., New York).
- Thirty-first, second session, through the Thirty-sixth—Robert M. T. Hunter (Dem., Virginia).
- Thirty-seventh, through Thirty-eighth, first session—William P. Fessenden (Whig and Republican, Maine).
- Thirty-eighth, second session—John Sherman (Rep., Ohio).
- Thirty-ninth—William P. Fessenden (Rep., Maine).
- Fortieth through the forty-fourth—John Sherman (Rep., Ohio).
- Forty-fifth—Justin S. Morrill (Rep., Vermont).
- Forty-sixth—Thomas F. Bayard (Dem., Delaware).
- Forty-seventh, through Fifty-second—Morrill.
- Fifty-third—Daniel W. Voorhees (Dem., Indiana).
- Fifty-fourth, through Fifty-fifth—Morrill.
- Fifty-sixth, through Sixty-first—Nelson W. Aldrich (Rep., Rhode Island).
- Sixty-second—Boies Penrose (Rep., Pennsylvania).
- Sixty-third, through Sixty-fifth—Farrington M. Simmons (Dem., N. C.).
- Sixty-sixth and Sixty-seventh until his death—Boies Penrose.
- Present chairman—Porter J. McCumber (Rep., North Dakota).

form of expenditures as no one else has studied them.

I have alluded to the defects of his personality which will limit his usefulness in his important post. But without question he is the best equipped man in the Senate to head the Finance Committee. Seniority, after promoting the inadequate McCumber, has at last worked out to put the right man in the right place.

The tariff probably disappears from the list of important matters with which the Smoot committee has to deal. It was the tariff which made the committee famous. But just now it looks as if the tariff would be shunted off into the hands of an executive commission with authority to act within certain limits of rates. And after the experience of this last year neither party will ever be anxious to take it as a whole away from the grasp of the commission. There never may be a somebody or other and Smoot tariff law.

But taxation, internal revenue taxation takes its place. How much taxes we have to pay will interest you and me passionately for many years to come. We may divide into groups and classes to juggle these taxes off our own shoulders and on the shoulders of some one else and thus make Mr. Smoot's life unhappy. But whatever happens we shall talk about taxes and fight about taxes for generations and in the center of it all will be Mr. Smoot.

He enters into his new job something of a crusader. His ideal is a simplification of the Federal taxes. I have spoken of his pursuing waste with such zeal that he has no time to dine out. He looks on our present tax system as involving a great deal of waste, waste of time and money.

He had a personal experience with the income tax. In 1917 he made out his return. To be sure he set the expert of the Senate Finance Committee at work on it, and the

more hateful than old taxes to which the public has grown accustomed.

Mr. Smoot will have his troubles persuading Congress to adopt his sales tax. Very likely he will never succeed. He will have little more power to do it as chairman of the committee than he has now, for he is not, as I have said, a good debater. Neither is he a good log roller. He is too exact about the position of bridges on other men's creeks.

Mr. Smoot is a conservative of the conservatives. He is a regular of the regulars among the Republicans. He will wish to spread taxation as widely over the public as possible. But he will run up against the farm bloc, which is organized to see that the farmers pay a little less than their share of the taxes, and before long other blocs similarly organized for similar purposes.

He is against extravagance in all its forms. And in his coming post he will face extravagance in all its forms. He will have his troubles. He hoped to be President Harding's chief adviser upon financial affairs and if he had been beaten for reelection in 1920 Mr. Harding, it is believed, would have made him Secretary of the Treasury. Like many Senators who hoped through their personal relations with the President to shape the Administration, he has been somewhat disappointed. It inevitably happens that the President depends more upon members of his Cabinet for advice than upon Senators and Mr. Mellon makes the financial policy of the Administration rather than Mr. Smoot.

The latter has been an important adviser, however. He has opposed the soldiers' bonus with all his force, and along with Mr. Mellon he has undoubtedly been a factor in leading the President to veto the bonus when it is presented to him by Congress. Over you can see his influence.

Harding's decision to accept a bonus if it came to him with a

protest to the Committee on Privileges with instructions to investigate. Then began a long-drawn-out investigation, with many hearings, and the citing of witnesses, among them high officials of the Mormon Church from Utah. Petition after petition came in, especially from women's organizations. Various organizations, denominational and otherwise, took up the attack and so far as possible every woman's club in the country was urged to march under the anti-Smoot banner.

The allegation was made on oath, though afterward disproved that Smoot was a polygamist. Mrs. Smoot herself was called upon and testified under oath that she was the Senator's only wife. Later the man who laid the sworn information of polygamy against Smoot admitted he had been "misinformed." It was the issue of polygamy, however, that aroused the women of the country. The Smoot trial became the trial of the Mormon Church, especially on the counts relating to alleged secret approval of plural marriages.

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