

DEFENDS MORMONS

Senator Sutherland Comes to Rescue of Congressman.

BUT LITTLE EVIL NOW EXISTS

Declares Old Conditions of Polygamy Are Fast Disappearing and Present Representative in Congress Does Not Favor Practice.

WASHINGTON Jan. 22.—Senator Sutherland today came to the relief of his colleague, Senator Smoot of Utah, defending his right to retain his seat in the United States Senate. "I am not here to justify wrongdoing in my own state," he said, any more than I am here to justify wrongdoing in any other state. Whoever may be thus employed must bear his own responsibility."

If Smoot was a violator of the law either as principal or accessory or recognized any allegiance to any power paramount to the allegiance he owed to the government, and the poor man in Wash. his flag and country, or by reason of his conduct he was so morally unfit that his continued presence in the Senate would bring reproach or shame upon it, he should not retain his seat; otherwise he should.

In public understanding, said Mr. Sutherland, Smoot was a polygamist this charge, originally made by one man, had been repudiated by every body connected with the case, it was still asserted in the newspapers and was given general credence in the country.

Discussing the charge that Smoot had taken an oath as apostle that conflicted with his obligations as a Senator, the Senator states that this charge had originally been made by the same man who had charged Smoot with polygamy, and that of the five witnesses who testified to it four had been shown by uncontradicted evidence to be persons of bad reputation, drunkards, or of unsound mind.

There was a large amount of evidence, said he, given by thoroughly reputable citizens of the state, to the effect that no such oath was taken, and, taking all of the testimony together, this charge was utterly discredited.

The two charges remaining were that polygamy and polygamist cohabitation were still being practiced by adherents of the Mormon Church and that the church interfered in political and temporal matters. As to the first charge the speaker traced the history with reference to the growth of polygamy until its final abandonment by the church in 1890.

The thing which the government of the United States as well as the Gentiles of Utah have been striving for, said Mr. Sutherland, was to get rid of the institution of polygamy. He took the position that it was recognized in the main that the people who had entered this unlawful relation did so under a religious delusion; that they were good men and good women, though of course utterly mistaken in their views regarding this matter.

"The fact that polygamy was therefore opposed to the united thought of the American people and to that of the Christian world," he continued, "was no argument that it was believed wrong by Mormon people who practiced it in the past. With the manifesto of the church forbidding future polygamous marriages the general opinion among Gentiles in Utah had been that the end of the contest should come. At that time there were over two thousand polygamous marriages or households. That some of these people had resumed their former associations was beyond doubt. As a general thing it had been thought that so long as relations were not flagrant matters, he traced the church history,

not haunted in the face of the community—that while they were not approved but were deplored—it was a hard situation to meet, and all things considered, it was better for the state to bear with it in patience until the people who occupied these relations, in the process of time, should pass away."

As to the charge that there have been polygamous marriages since the manifesto, he said that he had no means of knowing how many such cases there might have been, but that there had been some he had no doubt. These men occupied a wholly different position from the old polygamists, no word of excuse or toleration could be uttered by any honest man. "Every one of them, he declared, 'who thus arrogantly defies legislative enactment and violates religious command and by his conduct brings shame and reproach upon all the people, deserves to be searched out and to receive in punishment the extreme penalty of the law. The vast majority of the Mormon people are opposed to these new marriages.'"

Discussing the question of the interference of the church in political matters, he traced the church history,

showing that when the Mormons went to Utah in 1847 their movement possessed all the characteristics of a religious exodus. In the beginning they probably felt no need of a civil government at all. "Their religion to them was everything and other matters were of subordinate concern," he said. "For twenty years they were isolated from the world. There were no telegraphs, no railroads, no newspapers except their own. When a civil government was formed the religious leaders became their officials. Eventually the rule of the church became more and more, until the government in Utah was a virtual theocracy. The Gentiles, who organized under the name of the liberal party, fought to overthrow polygamy and church control in government matters while the Mormon people organized the people's party. In 1891, after the polygamy manifesto, the people's party was abandoned and organizations effected along national party lines. Since then, while charges of church interference have been made from time to time and while there may have been instances of interference by leading church officials in politics, on the whole there has been marvelous advance."

He thought that there was at least no more disposition on the part of Mormons to vote against Gentiles than there was on the part of the Gentiles to vote against Mormons. Mr. Sutherland declared that any charge that life or property was in the slightest degree unsafe in Utah, that the people or any of them taught their children to disrespect the flag, or that there was any feeling of hostility toward the general government was a cruel falsehood. He instanced the fact that when the war was declared with Spain Mormon and Gentile alike enlisted in large numbers. The Utah batteries, he said, under the command of Major Richard W. Young, himself a Mormon, a grand-son of Brigham Young, and as brave and loyal and splendid a gentleman as ever

were the uniform of a soldier, won for themselves in the Philippines, a name of heroic and imperishable glory. Mr. Smoot himself, said Mr. Sutherland, had always insisted that the practice of polygamy was wrong. He said Mr. Smoot's whole life had been a clean and above reproach.

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