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**DODGE REPORT IN
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
LITIGATION FILED**

Judge, Sitting as Master, Ap-
proves and Confirms Position
of J. V. Dittmore.

Boston, Mass.—After over four years
of litigation in the Christian Science
Church, ex-Federal Judge Dodge of
Boston, sitting as Master under ap-
pointment of the Supreme Judicial
Court of Massachusetts, has filed his
final report on the evidence. The
plaintiff, John V. Dittmore, the senior
Director of the Church, whose service
antedates the decease of Mrs. Mary
Baker Eddy, and who his associates
sought to remove from office, seems
to have been completely justified in his
contentions that undesirable and un-
wholesome conditions have existed in
the administration of the church gov-
ernment.

Judge Dodge finds from the evidence,
which includes testimony by the ma-
jority Directors themselves, that Mr.
Dittmore's dismissal was for the pur-
pose of doing away with opposition to
the wishes of the majority and also
because Mr. Dittmore had sought to
establish a standard of propriety and
conduct higher than desired by his as-
sociates. It is also found that a prin-
cipal reason for the hostility to Mr.
Dittmore was because of his rebuke
to his associates on numerous occa-
sions when offensive language was
used and offensive jests made at meet-
ings of the governing body of the
church. Judge Dodge holds that Mr.
Dittmore is still legally a Director
and that the effort to remove him and
appoint a successor more sympathetic
with the policy of the board is legally
null and void.

In regard to the illegality of Mr.
Dittmore's dismissal, Judge Dodge
says that no Director could fairly be
supposed to have accepted his posi-
tion upon the understanding that he
was subject to instant, arbitrary dis-
missal whenever a majority of his as-
sociates might find it expedient. The
Master finds that the vote attempting
to dismiss Mr. Dittmore "was only the
formal adoption of a conclusion previ-
ously agreed on outside the meeting"
and that it was for his associates, then
accusing him and at the same time pro-
posing to also act as his judges, to
afford him "such opportunity to be
heard in his own defense upon the
charges made as would satisfy the re-
quirements of natural justice." He also
finds that the complaints against Mr.
Dittmore were not founded upon first
hand knowledge and "were inadequate
ground for any but a purely arbitrary
dismissal." The Judge also finds that
there was never any question as to Mr.
Dittmore's sincerity in maintaining his
position and that nothing said or done
by him in maintaining his opinions
could have constituted adequate ground
for dismissing him, "unless the major-
ity's power to dismiss could lawfully
have been used by it for the sole pur-
pose of stifling any opposition in the
Board to their wishes."

The Master declares that Direc-
tors Dickey, Neal, Merritt and Rath-
von were animated by personal hos-
tility toward Mr. Dittmore and that
they had long planned among them-
selves to get rid of him. One of the
occasions when bad feeling was engen-
dered was when Dittmore refused to
join Dickey, Neal, and Merritt in at-
tending a play in New York which
Dittmore considered objectionable and
which had as the leading player a
person of notorious reputation. On
this occasion Director Merritt testified
that he urged Dittmore to accompany
them and said: "Come on with us.
You are not so much better than the
rest of us."

Judge Dodge also finds from the evi-
dence that "There were occasions in
1917, 1918 and 1919 upon which, at
meetings of the Directors, the plaintiff
(Dittmore) expressed disapproval of
utterances by Dickey of a kind toler-
able only when men only, and men not
disposed to be scrupulous in such mat-
ters, are the hearers—thereby arous-
ing resentment on Dickey's part, and
sometimes on the part of Merritt and
Rathvon." The testimony regarding
eight or nine such instances was taken
by Judge Dodge in private. In regard
to all of these occurrences Judge
Dodge finds from the testimony of
Mr. Dittmore and others, including
the cross-examination of the defendant,
Directors Dickey, Neal, Merritt and
Rathvon themselves, that Mr. Ditt-
more's account of them was substan-
tially true and that his "repeated in-
sistence upon a standard of propriety
in language or conduct stricter than
that accepted by his associates materi-
ally augmented their hostility and
dislike."

Judge Dodge concludes that Ditt-
more's co-Directors were "incapable,
on March 17, 1919, of impartial judi-
cial consideration of accusations
against him, especially of accusations
framed by themselves, had they ever
undertaken any such consideration."

At the present time Christian Sci-
entists throughout the world are deeply
interested in the facts brought out by
the Dodge report which Mr. Dittmore
and others are distributing in large
quantities among the membership.

The progressive element in the
Church seems to be gaining much
strength. It urges a more consistent
and practical interpretation of the
teachings of Mrs. Eddy by those in
authority and a more liberal adminis-
tration of the church government.
Next to a change in the official per-
sonnel in Boston, under a definite rule
of rotation in office, the greatest need
of the Church seems to be for the en-
couragement of greater local church
self-government and democracy accord-
ing to the spirit as well as the letter
of the Church Manual, and a minimiz-
ing rather than an encouragement of
the greater centralization of authority
in the self-perpetuating Board of Di-
rectors and their appointees in Boston.

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and 35c. Do you like horses?

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