

GOES AFTER BRUCE

"The Most Powerful Man In The State," Charges Senator Maloy.

HIS LONG LIST OF OFFENSES

He Is Also Suspected Of "Laying His Plans To Become A Candidate For Congress."

[From THE SUN Bureau.]

Annapolis, Md., Feb. 16.—Senator Maloy, of Baltimore city, in a series of "whereases" preceding a resolution calling for information from the Public Service Commission, goes after members of the commission and its employes hammer and tongs. It seems from these whereases that some of them have taken part in politics, and, worst of all, they lined up against the organization. That is the serious part of it. The general counsel of the commission, William Cabell Bruce, seems to have been the principal offender against Senator Maloy's idea of the proprieties, and he is charged with a number of things, in addition to being suspected of having Congressional aspirations.

The preamble to Mr. Maloy's resolution states that "it was in the legislative mind at the creation of the Public Service Commission that the great public service corporations should be removed from all connection with, regulation by or participation in politics; that to a body divorced from politics was being committed the regulation of these aggregations of capital which it was thought had played too prominent a part in conventions, primaries and elections, and that such was the talk of the time in both the legislative halls and corridors and in the public press.

Most Powerful Man In State.

In recent political contests it is reported that one of the members of the commission appeared on the hustings and in the recent primary election preceding the Mayoralty campaign the general counsel (William Cabell Bruce), the assistant counsel (Albert C. Ritchie) and the secretary (Louis M. Duvall) were active partisans; that under the view of the law creating the commission and entertained by the commission the general counsel seems to be the adviser, interpreter of the laws and dictator of its jurisdiction, and hence is the most powerful individual in the State of Maryland, being the dominating force of a body to which is committed the broadest powers over companies with a capital of nearly one and a half billions of dollars.

The Offenses Of Bruce.

"We find this official in the short time that he has been in office a leading spirit in a Mayoralty primary, prominent in a Gubernatorial primary, at the present time at the head of the campaign committee in this State of a Presidential aspirant, taking part in a movement admittedly aimed to legislate out of office an elected official of Baltimore, and, if signs do not fail, laying his plans to become a candidate for Congress while still holding the position of general counsel to the Public Service Commission; and all this without public comment, while the newspapers have teemed with disapproval of the political activity of a petty police magistrate."

Mr. Maloy Wants To Know.

The commission is asked to answer the following inquiries and give its reasons therefor:

"With a view of practicing economy in the public expenditures would it not be advisable to abolish the offices of general counsel and assistant counsel to the commission or both and impose these duties on the Attorney-General, and could not this be done without impairing the usefulness of the commission?"

"Why should not the general counsel and assistant counsel act as the attorney for the individual complainant when his complaint seems well founded, as attorney for the consumer when his meritorious complaints against the public service corporation, or as attorney for the city of Baltimore in the Gas Company case?"

"If legislation be required to enable the counsel to the commission to act as the people's counsel and to permit the services of engineers and experts in the pay of the commission to be availed of by the complainant, what legislation with this end in view would the commission recommend?"

"If an act be now on the statute books, which act applies to certain classes of individuals or objects and it is proposed by statute to increase or make more general the purview and application of the act, would such action on the part of the Legislature be deemed an interference with the powers now delegated to the commission?"

"Would the amendment of the Full Crew law, as proposed by the appended bill, in any way interfere with the commission in the performance of its duties?"

Will The Counsel Help?

"If complaints be lodged with the commission as to the condition of the railroad trackage at certain points, as to the hours of labor and the conditions under which railroad employes labor, will the counsel to the commission represent the complainants and will the complainants have the co-operation and help of the experts employed by the commission; and upon the filing of an impersonal application in the name of an organization of railroad men would the commission consider that it was called upon to investigate of its own accord, and if conditions were found to warrant, would it order changes?"

"What explanation has the commission of the fact that not one (except an order passed after an accident had occurred) among the many orders passed by it can be classed among those generally regarded as for the direct benefit of the laborers and employes of public service corporations, as distinguished from the consumer on the one hand and the investor on the other?"

"What explanation has the commission to offer of its participation in primary elections, and, in the opinion of the commission, should not such active participation in politics be prohibited by law?"

No Blow Intended.

In speaking of the order that he introduced in the Senate today, Senator Maloy said: "I want to disclaim any intention of aiming a blow at either the commission or Mr. Bruce. On the contrary, I was very much in favor of the creation of the commission and am now a strong advocate of the board. When the Attorney-General was preparing the draft of the Public Utilities law I procured copies of the Wisconsin and New York laws, studied the provisions of the acts, read the reports and publications of the commissions of these States, considered how they would operate in Maryland and made suggestions to the Attorney-General, some of which he embodied in the act as presented and passed."

"I also want to disavow any antagonism to Mr. Bruce. I have been a candidate for office in four primary elections and in two general elections, and also have taken an active part in the management of two Congressional and three Mayoralty elections, and it is not likely that with such experience I would be apt to rush into a matter where I might incur the ill will of such an influential man as the general counsel of the commission, simply for the purpose of annoying him."

"The truth of the matter is that I believe Mr. Bruce has misconceived the nature of his official duties and misunderstood the province of the commission, and by reason of his force and ability molded the commission according to his ideas. The counsel should investigate upon the mere filing of a complaint, and the counsel and the large force of experts and employes acting for the people. The public service corporations can take care of themselves, but the consumer and the employe need the assistance of these officials paid by the public and intended by the Legislature to be at the service of the humblest complainant."

"I am in earnest about this matter and hope that my efforts will result in making the Public Service Commission the useful institution that it was designed to be, and that it will be in fact as well as in theory a commission entirely divorced from politics and partisanship."

Connected With Train Crew Bill.

Senator Maloy told the Senate that his resolution was in connection with the bill for a "full crew" provision on all trains introduced by him yesterday, and stated that the order was designed to open the question of whether or not this provision for a full crew did not come under the jurisdiction of the commission.

Senator Hammond in seconding the motion of Senator Maloy for immediate consideration of his order took the stand that either branch of the Legislature is entitled to have such information as it may desire furnished it by this or any State board. "There is a great deal of information which we should have, but which we

have not been put in possession of," said he. "Although we are now in the middle of our session the only thing we have from the Public Utilities Board is a report that is so involved and tabulated that I must confess I can make nothing out of it."

He further charged that the people now know that the Utilities Commission had been uniformly ruling against them in cases brought before it, and said that the petitioner in every case had been put in a position where he had to elicit the information to make his case out and which ought to have been furnished by the experts and the counsel to the board.

The resolution was finally made the special order of the day for 1.30 o'clock next Wednesday, on motion of Senator Lee.

Mr. Bruce Has Nothing To Say.

Mr. Bruce has asked yesterday if he would make a statement in explanation of the charges against him. He replied that he had nothing whatever to say, that the Senate had a right to any information it desired, which the members of the commission, its counsel, officers or employes could give, and if the Senate asked for the information he would be glad to give it.