

## Longhand Note of Judge Harry S. Truman

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Thomas B. Bash (I wonder what the B stand for-"Bull or Baloney.") was elected Judge of the County Court for Kansas City or the Western District in 1928. The Utility interests were very much interested in his welfare; but poor man, before he finished he found that too many connections even in the utility business are not successful. The Road Bond program was so well tied up before Mr. Bash became Judge that he couldn't change the situation but he was always willing to waste a

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little bond money if the occasion demanded it. He is a personal friend of a very close friend of the Highway Engineer. This is a very bad combination for the taxpayer. The Highway Engineer's friend builds culvers, takes contracts on a small scale and does other sundry and various things for the Highway Engineer. I have to let the Highway Engineer steal a little in order to save the big things. The 3,500,000.00 of bonds for instance. But to get back to Mr. Bash. I gave him a very thorough study, hit Joe and the Horse Doctor who runs a mechanical fire department, had so infused him with warnings against me that I had a very hard time finding his approachable point. I had him out to lunch with my

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highway right of way men, both "goats" and honest and dependable. Not honest and dependable because they were "goats" but the other way around. He, Mr. Bash, wasn't interested in the taxpayers welfare he wanted a job for a "Rabbit" every time a "Goat" had one and the taxpayer be dammed. I gave him one and he put my political and personal enemy up to me for a job. I gave it to him on the theory that the feller might be personally honest and he is.

We had voted bonds to build an infirmary for old paupers to die

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comfortably in. In order to furnish electricity we had to enlarge our plant. I had employed Bauer & McDonald [Burns & McDonnell?], nationally known engineers to make a survey & recommendation. They made it in February 1929. Bash as an electrical expert didn't like it. Said we should have some technical changes, to which after some study and consultatation I agreed. He was right. Then we let contracts for such electrical and sewage changes as were necessary. One day when we were riding from Independence to Kansas City, Bash asked me if I'd object to the K.C. Power & Lt. furnishing us power if it could be done cheaper than our own plant. Of course I told him if the

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taxpayer could be benefited of course I was for it. He informed me, and I had reason to believe it, that money could be saved by letting the Power & Lt. Co. furnish us power. Some days later Mr. Betts of the V.P. of the K.C. Pr. & Lt. Co. appeared before the county Court and said that they would furnish Pw. & Lt. for so much money. I referred their offer to Bauer & McDonald [Burns & McDonnell?]. In the mean time I had to go to the hospital and stand an operation for rectal trouble. While I was in bed at the Research Hospital, Mr. McDonald came and gave me a statistical report and survey saying that the

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County could save about \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 a year by accepting the offer of the K.C. Pr. & Lt. Co. On this basis I accepted the offer. This was in June 1929 after I was able to go to Court. In July we let the contract for the services change and the electrical changes. About Oct. 1929 the contractor came to me and told me that the construction had progressed to the point where electrical connections were needed. I asked Bash what he & Betts had done toward getting us power. He said everything was all right not to worry.

Well about Jan. 30, 1920 Bash, Barr & myself went to St. Louis to investigate a recording machine. I suggested to them that

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we go by Jefferson City & see the State Utilities Commission about the progress of the controversy between the Insull [illegible] Company represented by the Missouri PC and the KC Pr. Lt. Co. who had been supposed to furnish us with Power by Oct. 1929. Bash showed me a telegram from Bettis saying for him to come to Kansas City at once. I took Barr and went to Jeff City and found that no application had been filed for the Kansas City . co. to furnish us power. I filed the applications and got a hearing and told the util-

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ties Commission if we couldn't get power from the K.C. P. & Lt. Co. we'd put in our own plant. Some sixty days later the Commission decided that the K.C. P. & Lt. Co. couldn't furnish us. I found that the machinery for our own plant couldn't arrive for possibly 120 days so I told the County Councillor [sic] to enter into contract with the Mo. Pr. & Lt. Co. & give us current. Bash was very much put out by this and wanted to postpone action. I found that he was selling equipment to both [illegible] Souls, Insull and the Commonwealth Pr. Co. which owned K.C. Pr. & Lt. I got both of them in & had an open hearing. The next day

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after the hearing Mr. Bash made an aeroplane trip to St. Louis to see the president of his company. It seems that Insull Companies had been customers of his mfg. co to the extent of some \$245,000.00 in the year previous and they were going to quit him on account of his double play. He'd been an employee of the K.C. Pr. & Lt. before his political career. Well he quit when his renomination came up. Money was more to him than patriotism or the taxpayers interest. Now we are to have a meat cutter for Western Judge. I wonder again.