

Officers Incompetent Governor's Letter Says

Basis for a complete investigation of affairs and conditions in Ardmore by the attorney general's department is found in a letter addressed to R. E. Wood of that department from Governor Robertson under date of November 12, in which it is stated that the Ardmore delegation "charged that the local officers including the judge of the district court, the sheriff and others are wholly incompetent, by reason of their bias and prejudice in favor of the law violators, to render good and efficient service in the prosecution of this (the Casey) and other cases.

Following is the full text of the letter which is now in the hands of Judge Elmer E. Fulton, who is here making an investigation and is conducting the prosecution of the four defendants in the Casey case:

November 12, 1921.

Hon. S. P. Freeling,
Attorney General,
Building.

Sir:

Attention R. E. Wood.

A committee of citizens from Ardmore called on me this morning, among whom was Hon. Russell Brown, Ex-County Attorney, Hon. Rutherford Brett, Ex-Justice of the Supreme Court, Hon. R. McMillan, Ex-District Judge, Hon. John Carlock, State Senator, Hon. F. E. Tucker, Ex-State Senator, Hon. Perry Maxwell, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Hon. John Dexter, President of the Rotary Club, Hon. Guy P. Cobb, President of the Lions Club, and laid before me the facts concerning a situation that now exists in Carter County relative to criminal law enforcement.

They dwelt with special emphasis upon a recent offense wherein Mr. G. W. Casey, State Oil and Gas Conservation Officer of Ardmore District, accompanied by his wife, while in the discharge of his official duties, stopped at a certain hotel or rooming house and while Mr. Casey was absent from his wife and engaged with a Committee of Oil and Gas men relative to and concerning his official duties, a party of lawless people composed of both men and women grossly insulted Mrs. Casey in said rooming house and later on the streets of the city of Ardmore, cruelly assaulted and beat the said Mrs. Casey in a most shameful and cowardly manner and inflicted injuries upon her to such an extent that her life at this time is despaired of.

Mr. Casey filed a complaint against these offenders in the Court of Justice of the Peace, and by reason of that fact his life has been threatened, also that of his wife and efforts have been made to bribe both him and his wife in order that they may not be present as witnesses at the trial of the case.

As a result of this assault the good citizens of Carter County, especially of Ardmore, have held a mass meeting attended by something like fifteen hundred or two thousand people and have named a committee, composed of those above set out to call on me and insist that the State take a hand in the prosecution of this and other similar outrages, and have charged that the local officers, including the Judge of the District Court and the Sheriff and others are wholly incompetent, by reason of their bias and prejudice, in favor of these law violators to render good and efficient service in the prosecution of this and their cases. This committee went into great details with me relative to the situation in Carter County, and I feel that I have been reliably and fully advised in the premises, and I have decided that such conditions has have been

represented as now existing in Carter County are intolerable and must no longer exist in this State.

And without further going into details this is to direct you forthwith to proceed to Ardmore, and consult when the above named Committee and other representative citizens and inform yourself of the true facts, and cause to be called and held a Grand Jury to make a thorough and complete investigation of this and other law violations in Carter County. In doing so you will supersede the County Attorney in the matter, and take full and complete control of the situation yourself, and through your regularly appointed assistants and such other help as I may see fit to assign for that purpose.

In making this investigation it becomes my duty to inform you that the committee above named feels that the state will be best served by having the Grand Jury impaneled by Judge Logsdon of Marietta, who is a regularly appointed, qualified and acting District Judge for the district in which Ardmore is located. And in case Judge Logsdon for any reason fails or refuses to act in that capacity then you are to make application to the Chief Justice for some non-resident and qualified District Judge to officiate.

The preliminary hearing of the persons charged with the specific offense above outlined will be held at Ardmore, Monday morning, November 14th, and you are directed to be present at that time and take charge of the investigation, doing any and all things that may be necessary to have justice meted out to all parties. You are not to persecute any individual or to cause any unnecessary embarrassment, but you are directed to see that full and complete justice is accorded to all parties and especially to the State of Oklahoma.

I shall be glad to have an immediate reply to this letter, indicating your purpose in the matter, and shall be pleased to render you every possible assistance in the performance of your duty.

Respectfully,

J. E. A. ROBERTSON,
Governor.