

Dodd in Deposition Admits He Flunked Bar in Connecticut

7/28/66 By George Lardner Jr.
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Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.) acknowledged yesterday that he flunked the Connecticut bar exams after his graduation from law school.

He said he subsequently passed the South Dakota bar examinations, practiced as a lawyer with the Federal Government, and was eventually admitted to his own state's bar some 13 years after his first try.

Connecticut's Supreme Court of Errors at first rejected his application for admission without examination on the grounds that reciprocity rules required 10 years' practice in South Dakota.

Dodd had never practiced in South Dakota. But the Connecticut rules were subsequently changed, after Dodd served as a prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, and he was admitted without examination.

The Senator gave the account in his Senate offices at a pre-trial proceeding in his libel suit against columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson. The questioning, expected to last three days, was closed to the press.

Anderson briefed reporters later. Dodd declined to see the press, but the substance of the account was later confirmed.

Dodd graduated from Yale Law School in 1933. After failing the bar exams in Connecticut, he served for a year as an FBI agent in a district that included South Dakota.

At yesterday's deposition, he said he took the South Dakota bar exams intending to stay there, but decided that opportunities there were too limited. He returned to Connecticut in 1935 with the National Youth Administration. He joined the Justice Department in 1938.

Dodd said that when he first applied for admission to the Connecticut bar under reciprocity rules, he felt that all he needed was ten years' experience rather than a decade's practice in South Dakota.

Anderson said Connecticut's supreme court, in effect, "scolded" Dodd for not knowing better. Copies of the decision were not immediately available.

At yesterday's deposition, Dodd refused, however, to answer questions about his campaign finances. His lawyers advised him not to reply on the grounds that the questions were beyond the scope of his lawsuit.

Anderson told reporters that a court order will eventually be sought to compel the Senator to answer. "He alleged in his suit that his reputation was damaged — so anything that might reflect on his reputation is germane," Anderson maintained.

Dodd's chief attorney, John F. Sonnett, who contends libel precedents say differently, has attacked charges and allegations along this line as "impertinent, immaterial and scandalous."

Anderson said the Senator also refused to say whether his son was on his Senate payroll and whether he used an automobile owned by a Connecticut contracting firm.

Bees Oust Worshipers

HADSTOCK, England, July 27 (UPI)—The congregation of an 11th Century church here has to hold services in the Town Hall because a swarm of bees have invaded the church and won't leave.