

WHENCE THE GREEN BAG?

This inquiry appeared in the “Reader’s Queries” section of the May 11, 1935 issue of *Notes & Queries*:

“GREEN BAG.” – For some time we have been trying to find out the origin of the phrase “green bag” as applied to political patronage. All the dictionaries and phrase-books give only the history of its use in connection with the law, or meaning a lawyer. Sir William Craigie, who is editing the new ‘Dictionary of American English,’ reports that he does not have any information about the use of the phrase in connection with political appointments.

The following are instances of its use.

Extract from the Evening Sun (Baltimore, Maryland), Apr. 2, 1935:

“Senate Approves ‘Green Bag’ Jobs . . .

“Annapolis, April 2 (AP). The Senate early to-day in executive session, confirmed Gov. Harry W. Nice’s ‘green bag’ appointments to the lesser State offices . . .”

Any help you or your readers can give us in this connection will be greatly appreciated.

Margaret C. Taylor.

Director of Reference.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.

We echo Ms. Taylor, and we encourage readers who have something useful or entertaining to say on the subject to email their thoughts to editors@greenbag.org.

