

# KITCHENER ANTI-CONSCRIPTIONISTS HOWL DOWN SIR ROBERT BORDEN

**Crowd of Men, Including Many of Military Age, Refuse to Allow Prime Minister to Deliver Address — Exciting Scenes in Big Skating Rink—Appeals of Mayor Gross and Mr. Weichel Unavailing—Mr. H. M. Mowat Also Shouted Down.**

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Kitchener, Nov. 25. — A crowd of youths and young men, many of them of German descent and military age, jammed the galleries of Kitchener's biggest auditorium — the skating rink — on Saturday night, and refused to give the Prime Minister of Canada a hearing. More disgraceful conduct has probably never been witnessed at any public gathering in the history of Ontario. It was a climax to rumors in circulation for some days prior to the meeting that a warm time was in preparation for Sir Robert and others who might attempt to speak with him.

The appeal of Mayor Gross for fair play was greeted with mocking cries of "We want Laurier!" and "Down with conscription!" and when his worship, driven to extremes, threatened "arrest or something worse," he was met with yells of defiance.

**Appeals for Order Vain.**

Mr. H. M. Mowat, K.C., the Unionist candidate in Parkdale, Toronto, was unable to speak for the uproar, the crowd shouting "Shut up!" and "Sit down!" and "Boo." Sir Robert himself fared no better.

The Prime Minister, upon rising, was hailed with loud cheers for Laurier and Euler, the anti-conscription candidate in North Waterloo, and counter cheers "for Borden." He made an effort to proceed, but could not be heard for the din. Finally he gave it up. "I distinctly see," he remarked, "that there is an organized effort to prevent public free speech here to-night, and under the circumstances I don't feel disposed to waste time. The attempt is obviously futile."

Mayor Gross again appealed in vain for order. "I feel ashamed," he said, "and I shall certainly feel Kitchener's reputation has been lowered if the news is flashed broadcast throughout the Dominion that you refused to give our Premier a hearing." Mr. W. G. Weichel, M.P. for North Waterloo in the last Parliament and Unionist candidate for the riding in the present campaign, begged for "a chance." "I ask you all to cast your eyes down at this table, where you will see representatives of all the Canadian newspapers," he went on, amid cries of "What do we care?" "This will go from Atlantic to Pacific—that you have insulted the Prime Minister of Canada," declared Mr. Weichel. But it was no use. When the disturbers in the galleries had yelled themselves hoarse, they found a new way of making a commotion by stamping on the floors and kicking boards of the seats.

**Disturbance Was Organized.**

It was evident for some time before the meeting that an organized attempt was to be made to prevent the Premier and his followers from speaking. As early as 7 o'clock a mob of anti-conscriptionists, including scores of youths who will be in the first draft provided for by the Military Service Act, mobilized at a prearranged meeting-place and paraded

through the main streets, carrying Laurier and Euler banners. "Laurier will save us and democracy," was the wording of one banner, which was torn to shreds by a handful of returned soldiers in a clash in the busiest part of the city. Another banner read: "Vote for Euler, the common people's candidate." This remained intact until the meeting place was reached.

**The Earlier Scenes.**

The big skating rink, capable of accommodating 5,000 or 6,000 people, was packed to the doors. As the anti-conscriptionists noisily surged into the galleries the people assembled on the main floor were singing "We'll Never Let the Old Flag Fall," under the direction of Mr. Daniel T. Helseya brother-in-law of Mr. W. D. Euler, the Laurier candidate. The walls of the rink were covered with such mottos as "On to Victory," "Vote for Union Government," "Stand by the Boys in the Trenches" and "Conservatives and Liberals United to Win the War." From the ceiling were suspended scores of flags of the allied nations. Shouts for Laurier and Euler were vigorously answered with cheers for the boys at the front and patriotic songs. Amid a further anti-conscription demonstration, the Union Government supporters on the ground floor rose en masse and sang the National Anthem. The galleries were quiet as the serious-minded men and women went on with the second verse of the new version: "God save our men, they are so dear to us; send them home again." More cheers for the boys at the front were followed by hisses and boos "for the boys who are not at the front."

It was at this juncture that the Prime Minister entered with a guard of honor composed of wounded soldiers in command of Sergt.-Major Maybee, formerly of the 71st Battalion. Sir Robert was accompanied by Mr. H. M. Mowat; Mr. W. G. Weichel, M.P. for North Waterloo in

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the last Parliament and Unionist candidate in the present campaign; Dr. J. F. Honsberger, who was to have been the Liberal candidate in North Waterloo had there been no Union Government, and his Worship Mayor Gross.

## Chairman Had Trouble.

Dr. Honsberger presided. Cheers for the anti-conscription leaders prevented him from speaking, and he could only utter a few disjointed sentences. Amid cries of "We want Laurier!" and "We want Euler!" and counter-cries of "O, you yellow-backs!" and "Slackers!" from several English-speaking women in the audience. Dr. Honsberger managed to say he was a strong supporter of Union Government, and to urge all parties to get together for the more effective prosecution of the war. He then called on Mr. Mowat.

## Stopped Mr. Mowat.

"This is a most enjoyable meeting," began Mr. Mowat, good-humoredly. "I am having a good time here. (Boos.) It is a pleasure to come to a town where they know how to put enthusiasm into their politics. (More noise.) Where I come from we cannot pretend to make any such demonstration as this. (Uproar.) We take our politics a little more solemnly than you do. We don't have so much fun over it. It is a pleasure to come here and exchange thoughts with you. (Prolonged disturbance.) Politics at the present time are all mixed up; we are all mixed up. (Cries of "You bet you're all mixed up!" and "Sit down!" and "Shut up!" followed by cheers for Laurier.) Mr. Mowat went no farther. As he took his seat the band of the 108th Regiment played "The British Grenadiers," followed by "The Men of Harlech," "Cock o' the North" and "Rule, Britannia."

## The Mayor's Appeal.

Mayor Gross followed with his plea for fair play. "I would not like to see you get into trouble," he said. "There are enough people in this audience to-night to deal with you. I hope you will take this as a warning. Don't get arrested, or have something worse happen."

## Howled Premier Borden.

Then Premier Borden advanced to speak. He was presented with a bouquet of chrysanthemums by a lassie in Highland dress, and returned the compliment with a kiss. Comparative silence reigned for a minute; then "three cheers for Laurier" were given from the galleries, followed by three lusty cheers and a tiger "for Borden" from the main floor. Sir Robert waited again for the heckling to stop. "It's all right, sir; you're winning all the time," observed a wounded soldier sitting on the front of the platform, and the Premier smiled. The noise was still going on, and he said: "Whenever you get through I am ready to begin. I have come here to-night for the purpose of discussing, if an opportunity is afforded—(cheers for Euler)—the questions before the country. I hope there is not an indisposition to hear them discussed—(uproar)—and after they have been discussed, and the people have given their verdict upon them, there will be an opportunity for the rest of the year to cheer one party or the other. (More noise.) I find myself on the platform here to-night—(cries of "You shouldn't be there!")—in company with men who hitherto have been opposed to me.

At this point the anti-conscriptionist disturbers, owing to the fact that no adequate police arrangements had been made to preserve order, became bolder as the meeting proceeded, and the noise was so great and the interruptions so frequent that the Premier was quite unable to make himself heard. All kinds of noise-producing instruments were brought into play. Horns were blown, cheers for Laurier and Euler were repeatedly called for and given, and a constant commotion was made by several hundreds of those in the gallery pounding on the wooden floors with their feet or kicking against the boards in the sides of the galleries. The disturbance was so great that Sir Robert decided not to proceed. "I distinctly see," he commented, "that there is an organized effort to prevent public free speech to-night, and under the circumstances I don't feel disposed to waste time. The attempt is obviously futile."

Several returned soldiers climbed into the galleries and tore down a banner urging people to vote for Euler, and one or two persons were thrown out or arrested by the police, including a Pole named Sam Orszek, who had a loaded revolver and bottle of whiskey in his pockets when searched at the police station.

## Hot Time for Weichel.

"It's disgraceful," exclaimed several persons sitting near the platform, and the Mayor again rebuked the disturbers. Then Mr. Weichel tried. "Now, boys, give me a chance," he implored. "I ask you all to cast your eyes down at this table around which are gathered representatives of all the Canadian newspapers. These men will chronicle the happenings here to-night, and the news will go all over the Dominion that you have insulted the Prime Minister." (Boos.) "This town has always been called a good, sports town, and why don't you give us a fair chance? (More noise.) 'I'm no quitter,'" shouted Mr. Weichel, trying to make himself heard. "I'm in this fight to stay to the finish, and I am going to win. (Mixed cheers and boos.) This sort of thing is not going to stop me from winning in North Waterloo. (Renewed cheers and boos.) I have stood up in the House of Commons for what I thought was right. I am not a coward to-night. I am not afraid to

come here and tell you why I voted for those three measures (the Military Service Act, the War-time Elections Act and the Soldiers' Voting Act). Won't you give me a chance? I asked the Prime Minister to-night to explain the Military Service Bill, and you young men would have heard something that might have changed your minds—(Shouts of "Never!")—but you absolutely refused to listen to him. In London, and Stratford, and St. Mary's, the Premier was given a courteous hearing. Why do you not extend the same courtesy here?" (A soldier—"Because this is Berlin.") (More din.)

## True to His Country.

Mr. Weichel, proceeding — I have now been your representative in Parliament for the last six years. (Shouts of "Yes, but not the people," and "You sold us.") When I entered the portal of the House of Commons I was handed a little book, and I took an oath that I would be true to my country, and, God helping me, I am going to be true to my country. (Premier Borden—"Hear, hear," and applause.) "The Franchise Bill does not apply here; it's to the foreigners in the West," explained Mr. Weichel. He had been instrumental in having the names of 3,000 or 4,000 Germans in Waterloo, who had never received naturalization papers, put back on the list. "If those young men were in my place they wouldn't be doing so much shouting," commented the speaker, taking notice of the noise. "They ought to be in the front trenches," added a soldier.

## Union Will Win.

"Whether you like it or not, North Waterloo is only one constituency, and Union Government is going to sweep the country," shouted Mr. Weichel, amid vigorous applause from those on the ground floor. "M. Euler, my opponent, has been making some pretty reckless statements at Elmira. He said he would not have the blood of 100,000 men on his soul. (Cries of "Shame!") Mr. Euler has never taken part in anything in the nature of a patriotic demonstration since the war started. If you have any red blood in your veins you will stand by the Union Government and see that our brave boys in the trenches get reinforcements. If you don't wish to have me as a young member it is quite easy for you to sidetrack me with your ballots, but as far as the Prime Minister is concerned, the Union Government is going in by at least 60 majority, and don't forget it." (Loud cheers from the ground floor.)

## Soldiers His Friends.

"Now about the soldiers' voting bill—"

A voice—Is he your friend?  
Mr. Weichel—Yes, my boy, the soldier is my friend, and if the soldiers in France were not your friends you would not be up there long to say that. (Applause.)

"Laurier wants to put farm implements on the 'free' list," proceeded Mr. Weichel. "What will that mean to Waterloo factories?"

Cries of: "Rotten!" "Boo," and "Stick to it, Billy!" and "They've all got yellow streaks!" Then more cheers "for the boys overseas."

"Some time ago Sir Wilfrid Laurier had said 'If Germany wins nothing else matters,'" observed Mr. Weichel, "but he is not saying that to-day. A French-Canadian member of Parliament asked me if the people of Waterloo county were loyal. I found 37 men had joined the army from his constituency as against 732 from North Waterloo; I found his riding had given nothing to the Red Cross, while mine had given much. That's the kind of stuff I've been up against, and if you had given us a hearing to-night the people of Canada would not take up their newspapers on Monday morning and ask 'What is the matter with Kitchener?'"

Someone in the gallery—Why don't you enlist?

Mr. Weichel—I beg your pardon.

No answer.

An English-speaking woman—Take some notice, he's yellow. (Cheers.)

## Some Don't Care.

Mr. Weichel—I saw my duty and did my duty, and I would do it again if I had an opportunity. If we lose the war we pay for the next half century.

From the gallery—Never mind we've got lots of money.

Another young man's voice—Who suffers in this war?

A woman—Not you. (Applause.)

Mr. Weichel—If Euler goes to Ottawa and they hand him that little book and ask him to take the oath what will he say?

A voice—He's a traitor.

Mr. Weichel—If he made the speech in Toronto, Winnipeg or any other city that he made in Elmira the other night there would be little left of him.

Shouts of "Bunk!" and "Kill it!"

## Will Have Another Think.

Mr. Weichel—Some of you fellow will have another think come in when you get into khaki. (Applause.)

A wounded soldier—Wait till the start sloping arms and forming fours. (Laughter.)

Mr. Weichel gave the reasons why he voted for the Military Service Act, adding with some emphasis:

"There's no party on God's green earth and no Prime Minister who would make me vote for something I didn't think was right," he declared.

Premier Borden—Hear, hear.

Mr. Weichel—If it hadn't been for the conscription bill you would have been cheering for me to-night.

A voice—That's right, give it to 'em, Billy.

Mr. Weichel's gameness won the admiration of a large majority of the five or six thousand persons present, and he was wildly cheered; he concluded. The crowd dispersed in a comparatively orderly manner.

and the excitement was all over half an hour later.

## Had Anticipated Trouble.

After the meeting Mayor Gross stated in an interview with The Globe that, hearing that there might be some trouble, he had called a meeting of the Police Commission on Friday to arrange for police protection. He deeply regretted the trouble. However, police arrangements were hopelessly inadequate to handle the disturbances.