

# WINNIPEG LABOR MAN HAS SMALL AUDIENCE

## Former Minister Says O. B. U. Not Responsible For Strike.

If the size of the audience which assembled in the Theatre Francaise on Sunday evening to hear Mr. J. S. Woodsworth discuss the Winnipeg strike affords a fair standard from which to judge the interest which Ottawa people take in that matter, then the prospect for securing much local assistance for the men now on trial for participating in the strike is not particularly brilliant.

Despite the small audience, however, Mr. Woodsworth made a good presentation of his case. He first dealt with conditions lying, as he expressed it, at the background of the trouble—the high cost of necessities of life, evidence of profiteering, and the fact that Labor men of the west are more radical in their views than those of eastern Canada. This he ascribed to the fact that the ranks of Labor in the west are largely recruited from old country workmen, where Labor legislation is at least thirty years in advance of this country. These men, while considered as radical, are merely trying to duplicate in Canada Labor conditions as they had them in England.

The O.B.U., he claimed, had nothing to do with the Winnipeg difficulty, as the strike was practically over before the O.B.U. movement had got fairly started in the west.

The speaker referred in terms of derision to an official of the Dominion Government who went west early in the spring to investigate labor conditions in Winnipeg, and returned with the report that the whole country was ready for revolution. This, the speaker claimed, was untrue, except insofar as the word revolution might mean a change or a turning-over.

"The situation existing all through Canada today is so serious that it must be treated seriously, and not flippantly," he said.

He scored most bitterly the midnight raids by the mounted police on the homes of Labor men, and the manner in which the trial of those arrested in connection with the strike had been conducted.

He also denied that foreign workers were prominently identified with the strike, and said that although he had mingled freely with the strike committee while the strike was on he had met none of these so-called foreigners. Most of them were either Canadians or British subjects.

There were five foreigners tried for participation in the strike; three of these were released; one was sent back to the United States, he having agreed to go, and the fifth, who served overseas and who wore the Mons star, was deported.

As for the case against himself, the speaker said he had been indicted for publishing seditious utterances in the columns of the Western Labor News. Two of these he claims were quotations from the book of Isaiah and credited as such, but in spite of that they were set down in the indictment against him as seditious.

The result of the strike, the speaker claimed, had been to unite labor in the west as it had never been united before.

In conclusion, he asked the audience to assist the men on trial in Winnipeg. All they asked was a fair chance, but the expenses of securing it would be heavy, and as he contended that the cause of all Labor was on trial in Winnipeg, he held that all workers in Canada should aid.