

BOARD REFUSES TO REINSTATE MR. LEE

Decides to Ask Chief Inspector to Report on His Qualifications

THE TWO YEAR TERM

Meeting Was Stormy at Times; Charges and Counter-charges

Members of the Board of Education at the meeting last night balked at the report of the Management Committee concerning the conduct of Mr. H. E. Lee of Annettee Street School and refused to accept their recommendations that Mr. Lee be again placed in charge of his class. The discussion was long drawn out, it being necessary to suspend the eleven o'clock adjournment rule in order to allow all the members, desirous of expressing their views, to speak. It was finally decided to act upon Trustee Shaw's amendment that the report be referred to the Chief Inspector who would inquire into the teaching ability of Mr. Lee. In this way it was pointed out by the mover, the resignation of Mr. Lee might be obtained without causing him to lose his certificate.

The matter was brought to a head by Trustee Brown who raised strenuous objection to the recommendation of the Management Committee. He pointed out that the following clause of the report was sufficient justification to ask the dismissal of any man in the employment of the Board: "That Mr. Lee did not teach loyalty in as direct or positive a manner as your committee would desire teachers to do, especially during the present war crisis." Mr. Brown stated that he felt strongly on the matter because he had five nephews who had volunteered to go to the front and one of them was in the trenches now. He thought that there was no question as to the disloyalty of Mr. Lee and no one who was not loyal should be allowed to teach in the schools. "I say that Lee should have been fired after the investigation," declared the trustee hotly.

Would Abide by Verdict.

Trustee Houston pointed out that the matter had been exhausted by the Management Committee. He was quite sure that there was not the slightest reason to think that Mr. Lee was disloyal. He admitted that his views about the organization of society were peculiar, but that was nothing to condemn him on, and thought that it would be the safest thing to abide by the verdict of those who saw the young man at the investigation.

Trustee Brown was not to be gainsaid, however, and he submitted a motion to the effect that the offending clause should be referred back to the Management Committee with a view to securing the resignation of Mr. Lee. This motion was not voted on, however, as Trustee Shaw put in an amendment to it, which was carried.

The claim was made by Trustee Hopkins that his witnesses, Inspector Rogers and Principal Wilson had not done him justice at the investigation. "They did not back me up as they should have after the things they told me which led me to make the charge," said the dissatisfied Trustee. "I further claim that that committee was bulldozed into passing that motion of Dr. Noble's," charged Dr. Hopkins. The charge was hotly denied by Trustee McTaggart, who stated in reply to the former speaker's contention, that the motion was previously known to the members of the committee, and that he had had no knowledge of what Dr. Noble intended doing. Mr. McTaggart held that Mr. Brown had placed the wrong interpretation on the clause already referred to. The Trustee contended that other members who were not in attendance at the investigation were in no position to criticize those who were there.

"If I thought for half a minute that Lee was pro-German in his sympathies I would not hesitate a minute to dismiss him," declared Trustee McTaggart. "But taking the evidence on the whole I could not conscientiously vote for his dismissal."

Believed Lee Guilty.

Dr. Steele stated that, although he had taken a neutral stand at the trial, he was taking the liberty now to agree with Trustee Hopkins that all the evidence which should have been brought out had not been done. Trustee McTaggart took exception to this statement, but Dr. Steele held his ground. "If Mr. Lee was not guilty, why did it need the best criminal lawyer in the city to defend him?" he asked. He expressed the opinion that Lee was a dangerous man to have in the schools on account of his religious beliefs, against which charges from a reliable source had been related to him.

"I do not see much in the evidence on which to convict the man summarily," stated Mr. Vokes. "He was weak and not used to the witness box, it is true, and he could have cleaned things up to the satisfaction of all if he had gone about it in the right way. But the committee found him not guilty, but unfortunately qualified their finding by the clause to which exception had been taken." The trustee continued to say that he thought the committee had wasted time in the manner in which they had conducted the investigation. "I think he deserves to be discharged, but I think it would be too drastic. I don't think he has enough experience to hold a position like that."

Fit for Sunday School.

If Trustee Brown had read the evidence, said Dr. Noble, he did not think that he would have put in his motion. The doctor admitted that some of the answers of Mr. Lee had been more fit for a Sunday school, but did not think that that should go against him.

Trustee Brown was inclined to think that although the committee had arrived at the proper conclusions on the evidence, there was something that had been kept back. All was not fair and above board. He said that in his opinion those things which should have been brought out had been skillfully hidden by Mr. Robinette. He thought the matter ought to be referred to the Chief Inspector.

"Why, Mr. Robinette did not speak three times while he was in the room," replied Dr. Noble, in

answer to the charge of Trustee Shaw.

"I know enough of Robinette to know that he manipulated the case," was the retort.

Trustee Brown insisted in having his motion put in the original form, and he was supported by Dr. Hopkins. Dr. Caroline Brown rallied to the support of the teacher in question. She thought that Mr. Lee had spoken in a manner too deep for the children to understand, and that that was his only fault. The last word for the defence was put in by Trustee Houston, who stated that if all the other trustees had seen the young man the way he had they would not vote to have him dismissed.

The vote was then taken on the foregoing result.

Trustee Brown had no more last resource. He moved that Mr. Shaw's amendment be struck out and his own original motion be inserted. The motion, however, was lost when put to a vote.

In the submission of several motions of which he gave notice previously, Dr. John Hunter, the lately-elected member to the Board, got into decidedly hot water with the remainder of the Board.

Length of Term.

The trouble started when Dr. Hunter introduced his motion to have the term of office for school trustee shortened to one year instead of two as at present. His arguments against the two-year term were in the first place that the ratepayers were against it. Secondly, that there was a great deal of confusion resulting in disfranchisement of many voters under the present system. And lastly, that it allowed the "delinquents" who had still another year to run to go unpunished. In connection with these "delinquents," the trustee referred to the appointment of Dr. Mackay to the position of Medical Inspector. He described the procedure as "abominable" and charged Chairman Hodgson with having been party to it. "You yourself remember what a howl went up over that affair," stated Dr. Hunter, addressing the chair.

The speaker then caused a small sensation when he stated that in his opinion Trustee Hodgson would not have been elected to office again had he been running.

Mutterings of a storm had been heard all through the speech of Dr. Hunter and it broke loose in a flood. Trustee Shaw jumped to his feet and scored the former speaker for his remarks concerning the appointment made by the Board. Particularly he objected to the word "abominable" which had been used to describe their action. The Board, he said, acted entirely within their rights and had done the proper thing. Mr. Shaw also resented the attack which had been made on the chairman, which he thought was totally uncalled for.

Carried Attack Home.

Other trustees were aroused also. Dr. Noble carried the attack right home to Dr. Hunter. "If I remember rightly," said Dr. Noble, "when Dr. Hunter was on the Board last time he was one of those who was all in favor of medical inspection, and what is more he was one of the strongest applicants for the position." "Is that not so, doctor?" asked Trustee Noble.

Dr. Hunter was taken somewhat by surprise but admitted that he had been after the position at that time but it was merely because he wanted to foil the efforts of what he described as the "machine" which had another man in mind who, according to Dr. Hunter, was not fit for the position. His explanation was received with skepticism by the other members.

Trustee Fairbairn announced himself in favor of a one-year term, but thought that the City Council were rather forward in expressing their views on the matter. He did not see that it was any of their business.

Trustee Brown was perfectly satisfied with the present system. He charged the City Council with interfering and also stated that in connection with the finances of the Board that all the big expenditure had resulted from the annexation of suburban districts. Figures could be garbled and twisted any way one liked. And this was being done by the Council, he charged, who endeavored to emphasize the expenditures of the Board of Education.

"The City Council is looking for a scapegoat on which to load its own sins," declared Dr. Noble.

Motion Was Lost.

Other members expressed their preference for a two-year term, but it was suggested that if all the trustees were elected together it would simplify matters. When put to a vote the motion was lost by 11 to 3.

Dr. Hunter's motion that the chairman be elected by ballot caused considerable flurry, too. The mover mentioned how the "machine" had been well oiled when Chairman Hodgson was elected to that position and how other trustees who had been in hopes of receiving that honor had been disappointed. Mr. McTaggart said that although he had been on the Board for a number of years he had never before heard of the particular machine to which Dr. Hunter made such frequent reference. Trustee McTaggart preferred the open vote.

Trustee Ellis in support of Dr. Hunter charged the chairman with having canvassed for the votes of the members. Chairman Hodgson hotly denied the accusation. He admitted that he had called up Dr. Brown on the phone but had not asked her to promise to vote for him.

This motion fared no better than the last one when put to a vote.

Hard Terms Used.

Dr. Hunter's last motion was also doomed. He moved that no member of the Board of Education be appointed to any salaried position with the department until after six months had elapsed from the date of his resignation from the Board. Such terms as "ridiculous," "foolish" were applied by several

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members who expressed little sympathy with the mover.

The vote was 12 to 3 against.

A notice of motion was given by Trustee Steele to apply for legislation to bring about an amendment to the Education Act to enable members of the Advisory, Industrial and the Commercial Committees to be chosen by the people.

Dr. Hunter stated that he was desirous of placing himself right on the matter of the appointment of Dr. Mackay. He said that he did not wish to cast any reflections on the character or ability of Dr. Mackay, because he did not think that a better man could be found. "But," he said, "I condemn and always will the way in which he was appointed."