

HELPING AUSTRIANS TO CROSS THE BORDER

Paul Mazur on Trial on Treason Charge—Warning of Counsel

The first trial for high treason known in Toronto for seventy-five years started in the Criminal Assize Court yesterday before Chief Justice Sir Wm. Mulock, when Paul Mazur, an Austrian, was charged with attempting to assist other Austrians to leave Canada in violation of the laws against alien enemies. The prisoner himself was a late member of the Canadian militia, having served in the Cobourg Heavy Battery and the 46th Port Hope Regiment.

Too Much Sentimentality.

Addressing the jury, Crown Counsel E. E. A. Du Vernet laid great emphasis on the serious nature of the crime committed. "There is a mistaken idea with some people," he said, "that this sort of thing in modern times can be dealt with very lightly, and that the matter is more or less a trifling offence. That is a very serious mistake, gentlemen. There can be no two opinions about this war with us: we are either for our country or against it. There is no middle course possible. Every German or Austrian that we allow out of this country goes to swell the ranks of the enemy. That's why it is a serious offence to send them out or allow them out."

Mr. Du Vernet strongly condemned the maudlin sentiment of those who sympathized with Germans. If they had been in Germany, said he, they would have been locked up so tight that they could not even get a communication through to their people. Here we were so merciful until we began to see how we were being imposed upon, and established registration bureaus. These Austrians gave a solemn undertaking that they would not go to fight. Mazur knew all about it, for he told the witnesses to tell the customs officers that they were Russians.

Austrians Helped to Frontier.

The Austrian prisoners escorted by guards of Canadian Dragoons were the first witnesses called. Joseph Vermonchuk did not "know" anything outside of the fact that there was actually a war until he was reassured that it was not he who was being tried. After this misunderstanding had been cleared up he seemed to "know" quite a number of interesting facts. The evidence of the Austrians went to show that Mazur had escorted them from Port Hope to Toronto, and thence to Bridgeburg, where they attempted to cross the border as Russians, as Mazur had instructed them.

"John Cooper," asked if he was a "brave man," said he "was no fool. He didn't want to fight for his country."

Vermonchuk gave the Court to understand that it was all the same to him whether Austria was beaten or not. He took no interest in Austria or the present warfare. Mr. Du Vernet wanted to know whether all Austrians were as courageous as these.

The case was adjourned until today.