

# Mayor's Version, Journal Story

Pembroke, Ont., Dec. 6th, 1915.

To the Editor of the Pembroke Observer.

Sir,—During my absence last week the papers of Eastern Canada have been copying a supposed interview given by me at Pembroke to a reporter of the Ottawa Journal. The following statement concerning it is due to the reading public.

Late on Monday afternoon, November 29th, a young man of prepossessing appearance came to my office and introduced himself as a representative of the Ottawa Journal, who had been sent by the paper to investigate a number of complaints made by readers as to their paper, and that he supposed that I was the Mayor. I told him that I had intended withdrawing my subscription from the Journal December 15th, when it was run out, and that the paper had not improved for a long time; that their business dealings with subscribers were unsatisfactory and that they would print any correspondence sent them as long as it was sensational without making enquiries as to its being authentic. He said that it looked as if he was up against it.

I drew his attention to the fact that the Ottawa Citizen was distributing their evening edition from door to door in Renfrew, to which he replied, "That is just what has brought me up here, to head the Citizen off."

He stated that he had just left the Globe and that he and Mr. — were going to take the Journal in hand and straighten things up as the paper needed it. I stated to him that a better paper for the public at Pembroke was the Citizen, but coming in at noon was an objection, while the Free Press was a much better paper for evening news.

"The Journal," he said, "is a paper ahead of the city in which it is published. The Citizen I must know was run by the Southams who lost money on it by refusing to take liquor advertisements, while they make heaps of money on the Hamilton Spectator and Calgary Herald which accepted all kinds of liquor advertising."

I told him that the Journal for a long time had made a practice of duplicating the outside page news on inside sheets and that the paper was a rehash of the news of the Montreal Star of the day before, and produced a Star of the Saturday previous and proposed proving it. He objected as the copy was a Saturday extra and that the Journal would have to print the same news on Monday following. He also went into detail as to Mr. Lyon taking Dr. McDonald's place on the Globe, who he said having lost his pull when Senator Jaffray died and his salary having been cut in two, thought there was more money in addressing Peace Conferences than editing the Globe.

I got up from my chair signifying that my time was up and expecting that the representative would take the hint to leave.

"Cannot you give me half an hour this evening?" he enquired.

"No, I am too busy," I said.

"Cannot you give half an hour to-morrow, as I want to write up your town?"

"No, I am going away," I replied.

"Well, cannot you give me names of some of your leading men? Who is the Chairman of Education?"

I told him that Sheriff Morris was.

"Is that you?" he asked.

"No," I said.

While I stood, expecting him to

leave, he at once launched into what has since appeared the one question which brought him to my office, viz., the question of our German population in and around Pembroke.

"You have a lot of Germans in Pembroke?"

"Yes, about one-sixth of the population."

"A number in the country around Pembroke?"

"Yes. The townships of Petawawa, Alice, Fraser, Wilberforce, North and South Algona, Hagarty, and part of Stafford, have about fifty per cent. of German descent.

"Are these people patriotic?"

"You can judge for yourself. As Mayor, I have sent invitations to the four clergymen of the German churches to attend the patriotic meetings held in Pembroke. One acknowledged my invitation, and two others attended meetings, each on separate occasions. I often meet a certain German who has been in Pembroke for thirty-five years and when he refers to Germany, speaks of it as home."

"Are there any German spies in Pembroke?"

"Judging from the number of German spies in Europe and the United States, I think that it would be reasonable to suppose that there might be a thousand in Canada, and from the proximity of Petawawa camp it would be expected that there might be some here."

"Do you think that the spies would be from among the German citizens?"

"No. If there are any spies, they would be from among old German soldiers or those who may have come into our town within the last year or so. I want you to understand that the Canadian born of German descent are among our best workers and it only takes about two generations for them to assimilate with the rest of the population."

"Why do not the authorities round up the ultra-German element?"

"Because our politicians would not admit of it, one party being to blame as much as the other."

"What politics are you?"

"Conservative."

"What politics are your representatives? Liberal?"

"No. Both are Conservatives."

"Do you know the German Post? Is it pro-German?"

"No. I do not read German. Go and see the editor, Mr. Christiansen yourself. Get a late copy and some old ones and someone to read them for you."

The statement made in the Ottawa Journal that Mayor J. L. Morris gave as his opinion that Pembroke was "the hub of an organized spy system, radiating throughout Canada and connecting with an even greater system in the United States," is untrue and made only by the Journal reporter for the purpose of giving the paper "hot-stuff" to help their waning circulation in this part of Canada.

Nothing was said by the Mayor as to any part of our population being pro-German, nor any statement made by him that there was a system for conveying news across the border as to Petawawa camp, details of Government work undertaken in Pembroke, and fyle of enlistments. Nor was anything said as to political parties refraining from disturbing the German element for fear of harming themselves when election time came around and the Germans having a free hand for machinations. This is pure fabrication.

J. L. MORRIS,

Mayor of Pembroke.