

WILL INVESTIGATE PRO-GERMAN CHARGES

Lt.-Col. Lochead Declares Berlin People are Preventing Recruiting.

CALLED TO OTTAWA

General Hughes Will Make Full Inquiry Into Alleged Plotting.

Special to The Star.

Ottawa, Jan. 31.—General Sir Sam Hughes has called for an investigation into the alleged pro-German agitation in Berlin, and for that reason has summoned Lieut.-Col. Lochead, of the 118th Battalion, to this city for a conference. That was the statement of the general himself last night, who added that Lieut.-Col. Lochead is a most efficient and enthusiastic officer, and that any complaint made by him of anything which prevents recruiting should be investigated.

A despatch from Berlin states: "The pro-German element in this city has forced Lieut.-Col. Lochead into a corner. The lieutenant-colonel declares he has evidence that the pro-Germans are preventing recruiting, and that he is going to fight it through with them."

Used Seditious Language.

It adds that the particular case which promises to bring the situation to a head concerns Walter Meyer, a German employed in the rubber company there. For months and months, Col. Lochead explained, there has been most pronounced pro-German sentiments expressed. There were rumors of them everywhere. He was besieged with demands to do something. Pro-Kaiserism seemed rampant, and he was urged to do something. He tried. He wanted evidence to prove the charges. There he failed.

"Every time I asked for positive proof, for affidavits, the informants closed up tighter than a clam, and I could get no proof," he explained.

"Not long ago a young man named Stewart, also an employe in the rubber company, enlisted, and notified the firm. He remained at his employment for a few days, and was approached by Meyer, who asked him if he was going to war. Stewart answered that he was, that he was a Canadian, and would fight for King and country. Then Meyer, according to the sworn evidence taken in court, most outrageously abused the young man, using the most seditious and disloyal language. This was reported to Col. Lochead, and the man was summoned.

Court Freed Him.

"He appeared before Magistrate Weir, and was remanded for trial. Then something happened. The trail of the serpent of politics can be seen, for orders came from Ottawa to the Attorney-General's Department that the trial must not go on, and Meyer was liberated."

This was bad enough. Then followed Col. Lochead's attempt to get recruits for the 118th Battalion by the personal canvass method. His men were insulted, and rows resulted. He was made the victim of a vicious attack through the local Conservative newspaper. The Trades and Labor Council also joined in.

"Recruiting was hard enough before, but with the opposition, emboldened by the success of their pull in the Meyer case, continued to throw barriers in my way," Col. Lochead stated. "It was then that I determined to fight."

"I have no desire to prosecute Meyer. That is not the reason. But there is a dirty element in this city that must be curbed. They have become emboldened by the success of their efforts in keeping Germans from being interned. There was the Lappert case, first of all. Here was a preacher from the United States who should have been deported as an undesirable—the easiest thing possible to have done—because of his pro-German attitude, and he was allowed to remain. Pro-German utterances were common, but it was impossible to get the proof. Now I have this man Meyer, and I am going to have the Government put a stop to this sedition, or know the reason why. I mean business, and I am going to see this thing through, as I said before."

Berlin Right at Heart.

"Berlin at heart is right. The best people, German and British alike, are loyal. One might say that there are three strata of people here—the loyal German, the lukewarm German, and the out-and-out pro-German. This is the bad class, and I want to have them taught their places. It will be impossible to recruit men until they are curbed. Scores of them should be interned. They would be in any other city, but the weakness, or worse, of those in authority, has resulted in placing the city of Berlin in a false light in the opinion of the rest of the Province."

An impartial investigation leads one to several conclusions: First, that Berlin has done little in the way of recruiting; second, that there is an exodus of German-born young men to the United States; third, that there is a strong pro-German sentiment here, not among the business men, but among the laboring class; fourth, that politics is working to prevent the formation of the battalion; fifth, that Berlin has been the stamping ground of the pro-German propagandists of the United States.

The Citizens' Recruiting League at a special meeting on Saturday made arrangements to secure the names of all eligible young men of military age in the city within the next two weeks. A determined effort will then be made to raise the battalion.