

BERLIN, ONT., SOLDIERS MOB LUTHERAN PASTOR'S HOUSE

Dragged Him Forth, Hatless and Coatless, and Paraded Him
Through Streets as Warning—Family Fought Crowd
—Complaint to United States Consul.

REV. MR. TAPPERT BROKE PROMISE TO LEAVE COUNTRY A WEEK AGO

Special to The Star by a Staff Reporter

Berlin, Ont., March 6.—Once more the racial fires of this city have burst into flames. This time it is at the expense of the Rev. R. C. Tappert, pastor of the Lutheran Church, who from his supposed pro-German sympathies has aroused the antipathy of members of the 118th Battalion stationed here. The hostile feeling running against him reached its pitch on Saturday night shortly before 11 o'clock, when about sixty soldiers broke into his home, treated him to more or less physical violence, dragged him into the open, paraded him about the streets for an hour hatless and coatless and were about to lock him in their barracks when he was rescued by one of the officers of the 118th.

Two Soldiers Arrested.

The result is that two soldiers, a sergeant and a private, sorted out as ring-leaders in the attack, have been placed under civil arrest on a charge of assault and have been turned over by the military authorities. A further result is that the Rev. Mr. Tappert is threatening to make the affair the means of international complications with the United States, whose citizenship he claims. Already the American consul at Hamilton has been communicated with and Lieut.-Col. W. N. O. Lochead, commanding officer of the 118th Battalion, has received a long telegram from the consul at Hamilton protesting against such treatment of an American citizen at the hands of the Canadian soldiers.

Berlin Much Excited.

Berlin, civic and military, is thoroughly worked up over the incident. The military officials regret the affair exceedingly, especially in view of the fact that racial feeling was gradually giving way under the efforts of Col. Lochead. The colonel does not hesitate to pronounce the affair as a disgraceful one, stating that he will lend his full support to the civic authorities in punishing the ring-leaders and adding that if the offenders are not penalized in that way they will be in a military way.

The sergeant named as the ring-leader is English-born, is described as a fine type of soldier, experienced in the British army in other campaigns, and is a soldier whom the battalion can ill afford to lose. The only explanation given so far for the attack on the minister is that recruiting had been going so slowly with the battalion, all the blame for which was put upon pro-German sentiments. The soldiers were gradually losing their patience with conditions and so decided upon making an example of the man they believed to be largely responsible for that sentiment.

Enthusiasm Warps Judgment.

The only extenuating feature which Col. Lochead can see for their conduct is that their enthusiasm for recruiting, their keen disappointment at the poor results, sweep away their judgment. In his recruiting, Col. Lochead has faced countless difficulties so great that during his four months' campaign he has secured only 400 men. Some weeks have passed with only a single recruit.

Ever since the wrecking of the Concordia Club, about two weeks ago, extra precautions have been taken by the commanding officer to prevent a repetition of outbreaks on the part of soldiers, so great that for a time all night passes were cancelled and men were confined to the barracks, except for a special patrol of thirty men each night, whose duty it was to see that no outbreaks occurred.

Of late, as all trouble seemed to be past, the men had returned to old conditions, and night leave privileges restored. On Saturday night Col. Lochead was in London and the most of his officers had gone out of town, but as nearly as he has been able to sift out the matter what happened was this.

Tappert Overstayed Time.

Tappert had promised to give up his pastorate and leave town by March 1, and when he did not do so by the time fixed, the soldiers evidently presumed that he was playing with them. The squad of soldiers visited Tappert's house at a quarter to eleven. Lights were visible when they approached, but immediately upon them knocking the lights went out. The soldiers then broke away

the front doorway and

reached through the

the intention of un-

The key fell to the

soldiers broke the

into the front

Hallway.

the house

a little talk with him. The man refused, claiming legal right to run his own household. He was then given two minutes to put on his hat and coat and go with the soldiers. When the time was nearly up Tappert made a rush for the telephone and called the police number. He was pulled away from the phone before he could give a message, and it was at this point, as nearly as Col. Lochead can find, that the general row took place.

Family Joined Struggle.

The soldiers began dragging the minister from his house. Tappert struggled and the soldiers' efforts were more or less hampered by the activities of the remaining members of the Tappert family, none of whom, however, other than the pastor claim that they received any worse physical treatment than being "pushed rudely about." It may have been in the fight in the hallway that Tappert received a blackened eye and a cut on the back of the head, which required two stitches, but there is some difference of opinion as to when he met this injury.

Preached in German.

One citizen states that it was out on the main street that Tappert halted the parade to preach to the soldiers in the German language, when one of them struck him in the face. Whichever it was, Tappert was taken out and paraded about the streets for an hour, after which he was taken to the barracks and was still outside when the officers arrived. Two captains rescued him from the men and escorted him to his home.

On Sunday Col. Lochead personally visited Tappert and expressed his regret at the occurrence. When seen yesterday Tappert absolutely refused to discuss the matter for publication, though he did not hesitate to state that he was placing his case in the hands of the American Consul and would appeal to him for protection. Except for the fact that his right eye is blackened the Lutheran does not show any outward signs of his experience. The rest of the family, however, are apparently suffering from nerves and scrutinize visitors carefully from behind blinds before unlocking the door.

Tappert Won't Talk.

"Anything I have to say is for the American consul," Tappert stated. "I have partly told him my case. I will also go to see him to explain the rest. If there is anything more to be said he will say it."

Mrs. Tappert managed to give a partial account of her side of the trouble before she was silenced by the head of the house.

"They broke through the door and began pushing us all about rudely," she relates.

"Of course we all tried to fight them off, especially our boys, but they are not very big. They couldn't do much. We were packing up ready to go away—" Then German words from an adjoining room where Tappert had gone broke off the woman's story.

Girl Fought Soldiers.

A black patch decorated the hand of one of the girls, Ruth Tappert, and when asked as to what that meant, she explained.

"I fought. I struck one of the soldiers across the face with my fist, and I think I bloodied his nose, for my hand was all over of blood afterwards."

Then she too broke off her story.

"It was a most unwise thing for the soldiers to do," declared Col. Lochead to-day. "I had warned them against any such violence against people or property, especially after the wrecking of the club. I was taking other ways to inspire British sentiment."

"Tappert was recognized among the soldiers as pro-German, and they were hasty. As a matter of fact the Tappert were already packing up their effects to leave the country and they say they want to get away as quickly as they can. I have warned the men repeatedly against such violence and now the men responsible must go."

Cannot Deport Him.

"Tappert, you know, is a naturalized American citizen, but he has been in this country just over three years, so long that he cannot be deported. Now he claims American protection. That is why I apologized for the treatment he had received that together with the fact that I thought it was not fair treatment for Britishers to hand out to any person. Since I warned the men in a body and not individually against violence, I cannot punish them, except by dismissing them."

Congregation Suddenly Loyal.

For some time past the soldiers have been paying attention to Tappert and his church. A week ago Sunday a body marched to his church and at the close of the service insisted that the congregation sing "God Save the King." Yesterday again they visited the same church, but that time the congregation did not need any admonitions to be vocally patri-

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