

RUSSELL ON STAND IN HIS OWN DEFENCE

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Plainly Evident**

HIS EVIDENCE

**Throughout Is in Nature of Justification
for Formation of
the O.B.U.**

WINNIPEG, Dec. 17.—Low wages, refusal of the employers to recognize trades unions and the order-in-council prohibiting strikes, were the reasons for unrest among the workmen in 1917 and 1918 leading up to the general strike in 1919, according to evidence given by R. B. Russell, charged with seditious conspiracy on the stand today as witness in his own defence.

Russell's evidence throughout was in the nature of a justification for the formation of the One Big Union and its aims and objects. He characterized the movement as industrial unionism.

In referring to the government railway board, he said that the government representative, Hon. Arthur Meighen, minister of interior, in answer to a refusal of the railway shopmen to accept the award of the board in 1918, said that the workers would be put in khaki and forced to work. It was stated on good authority today that Harry Dasha'uk, the witness for whom a bench warrant was issued yesterday, had been located in Winnipeg.

Crown Objects.

Frequent objections by the crown characterized the forenoon proceedings on the ground that much of the evidence the witness was giving was irrelevant. At one point Mr. Justice Metcalfe addressing the jury declared he had allowed Mr. Bird, defence counsel, a great deal of latitude in his examination, because to stop him with a large number of objections would be a hardship. Referring to a statement made by Russell that the Canadian Pacific railway had been unjust in dealing with employees whom he represented, his lordship declared, was wholly irrelevant.

"I am doing what I believe to be fair and just, but I have been directly and indirectly accused of unfairness," he said.

"Counsel may get a judgment by abusing the judge and the crown. The defence has continually tried to show the unfairness of the crown and the judge. I have nothing more to say."

Russell on Stand.

R. B. Russell, charged with seditious conspiracy and committing common nuisance, took the stand this forenoon as the first witness in his own defence. He appeared haggard with signs of nervous strain and worry plainly evident, but he did not take advantage of Mr. Justice Metcalfe's permission to sit down.

Replying to questions by J. E. Bird, defence counsel, Russell said he was born in Scotland 31 years ago, and had lived in Canada nine years, all of which had been spent in Winnipeg. He then described his activities in various official positions in the Machinists union and his attendance of numerous conventions.

Mr. Bird stated that he wished to put in the preamble of the Machinists' union, and a prolonged debate followed between opposing counsel as to its pertinency, the defence stating that they wished to show that the accused was a true trades union man, and the crown contending that trades unions were not being tried for sedition.

A. J. Andrews, crown counsel, said he had no doubt that the machinists constitution was perfectly legal, but the matter was irrelevant as the machinists had not started the strike. Mr. Bird said he purposed to show that they did start the strike, and not the O.B.U., but Mr. Justice Metcalfe said he did not think that the starting of the industrial upheaval could be traced to the machinists.

Member of I.L.P.

Mr. Russell, continuing his evidence, stated he was a member of the Independent Labor party of Great Britain, which has 48 representatives in the house of commons. His membership card was put in evidence, over Mr. Andrews' objection.

Mr. Bird proceeded to read parts of the constitution of this association which states that it is open to all Socialists, who endorse its platform and are not affiliated with any other political organization. The aims of the association, as outlined, are the establishment of a socialistic state, where land and capital will be held by the community and administered for the benefit of all.