

NAMES OF HUN DIPLOMATS ARE FREELY BANDIED IN LOCAL COURT

**John Jacob Bleiler Before
Magistrate Charged With
Trading With Enemy**

TROUBLE ARISES OVER INVENTION OF WAR DEVICE

**Ernest Hedenstrom Is Star
Witness in One of Alberta's
Most Novel Law Suits**

The names of Count von Bernsdorff, Hugo von Papen, and other German celebrities who figured largely on the front pages of New York newspapers some time ago, were bandied about freely in Magistrate Belcher's court this morning, in connection with the case against John Jacob Bleiler, Wetaskiwin, who stands charged with trading with the enemy, contrary to the order-in-council dated October 30, 1914.

Ernest Hedenstrom, star witness for the prosecution, unfolded a tale from the witness box that was reminiscent of the dime novels of childhood's happy memory, but under a grilling cross examination by A. G. MacKay, who along with Mr. Watt of Wetaskiwin, appeared for the accused, was not quite so sure that Mr. Bleiler was the deep-dyed villain he had at first alleged.

Hedenstrom, it appears, is the inventor of an aerial torpedo, which, to quote the enraptured inventor, "is a control that can be applied to any aeroplane, and working automatically without aviator or pilot, will allow the machine to travel to any predetermined point, drop bombs, and then return to its original base for a further supply of bombs. Enroute the machine also takes photographic impressions of the surrounding country. By the aid of this control bombs can be shot 100 miles."

Feared Bleiler's Motives
Witness stated that the news became noised around Wetaskiwin that he had a war machine out of the ordinary, and that Bleiler made the statement, "I can get you the money to perfect that aeroplane invention," the aerial torpedo being still in a nebulous state during the fall of 1915. Hedenstrom even then was in communication with the Allies, but fearing that Bleiler wished to secure control of the invention to hand it over to the Fatherland, under instructions from a man named Elliott, decided to lead accused along and presumably fall in with his plans.

Armed with a letter of introduction to the German ambassador, provided by Bleiler, Hedenstrom, having raised \$2,000 for the purpose of building his machine, set out for Washington, D.C., last February. Having arrived in the United States capital witness sought out the German embassy but did not meet the count personally. An under secretary, after reading the letter, referred Hedenstrom to a New York address. There, the witness alleged he met von Thral, editor of a German paper in New York, and von Egel, whom he claimed was purchasing agent for the German government and aide de camp to von Papen, who was later ordered out of the States.

The two New York agents thought favorably of the aerial torpedo and told him to come back when the invention was perfected. Hedenstrom went around again to their office the next day but alleges they had been arrested by U.S.A. authorities in the meantime, so he let the matter drop. Witness then spent some time developing his machine, and stated that the invention was successfully demonstrated before his return to Wetaskiwin.

Discrepancies in Evidence
Cross examination by Mr. MacKay brought out some discrepancies in Hedenstrom's evidence, for it appears that Bleiler was acting as financial agent for the inventor long before any question arose of selling the torpedo to the enemy. Mention was made of a meeting in the Northern Crown Bank, attended by Messrs. Hedenstrom, Stimmell, Bleiler and Wright, in the course of which the bank manager refused to advance any money for perfecting the machine. This refusal was in face of a statement by Wright, Hedenstrom's Edmonton agent, that the British government would gladly pay \$5,000,000 for such an invention.

Hedenstrom admitted that when Messrs. Wright and Dunwell secured him \$3,000 to build his machine, he severed connections with Bleiler, who had been previously trying to interest capital. He alleged that when accused learned he was going to Washington to perfect the torpedo he (Bleiler) offered by letters, etc., to pave the way for a sale to the German government.

This statement rather crumbled under cross examination for witness admitted he never really intended to sell the machine to the enemy, in fact would not think of accepting German money, and could not swear that Bleiler had been trafficking with the Germans, other than giving him the letter of introduction to von Bernsdorff. Cross examination by accused's counsel also elicited the information that it was upon instructions from a man named Elliott that Bleiler's good offices were sought in securing entry to the German embassy, with the intention of entangling the accused in the meshes of the law.

Court adjourned at 12:30 and the hearing is being resumed this afternoon.