

# VOTE-FEARING POLITICIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR "BERLIN"

Slurs Upon Liberals Ill-Timed in Face of the Facts—Government Kept Hesitating Until Grip on Kitchener's Actions Become a Joke.

Special to The Star.

Kitchener, Jan. 6.—When newspapers like the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto News accuse political opponents of disloyalty or of seeking to advance their political fortunes by appeals open or tacit to non-British elements in the community, they chose to forget what has been going on in Waterloo County and in Kitchener in particular since the outbreak of war.

It is safe to say there has not been in the whole British Empire a more pitiable example of catering, not merely to a non-British element in the community, but to actually alien enemies, than has taken place here, and that catering has been done not by "disloyal Liberals" but by the political friends and idols of the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto News.

First, war had no sooner been declared than printed notices were posted at several points in "Berlin" as it then was, calling upon German reservists to report to a named individual, presumably to secure information as to their duty and assistance in performing it. Since then many a German reservist has found his way from here across the line and undoubtedly by devious ways to the Fatherland. One after another they have disappeared from this neighborhood. Canadian graves in Flanders are probably filled by men who fell under bullets fired by German reservists from "Berlin," Ontario. Those reservist notices no longer appear—that would be too flagrant. But has the movement been stopped, or if stopped, is it for any other reason than that the supply of German reservists has given out? Was anyone ever punished? Was anyone ever prosecuted? If not, why not? There is only one possible answer. The political idols of the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto News were afraid of losing votes.

## ALIENS ALLOWED AT LARGE—NO REGISTRATION.

Second—Registration of alien enemies was speedily inaugurated after the war in every portion of the Empire—that is, every portion of it but "Berlin," Ontario. In Toronto and every British city this was regarded as an absolutely essential step. How much more so should it have been attended to in a centre known to contain many Germans? To-day, there are 700 alien enemies registered in Kitchener. But it seems incredible that it was not until March, 1916, after almost two years of war, and then only after the most emphatic protests and agitation, that the Government made provision for this registration in Kitchener. What was the reason? Only one is possible. The powers that be, supported in every emergency by the Toronto Telegram, were afraid of giving offence and losing votes.

Third—Then came the campaign on the part of the British elements to change the name of Berlin. How obstacles were thrown in the way of that campaign at every turn; how the Ontario Government tried to throw responsibility on the Ottawa Government, and the Ottawa Government on the Ontario; the delays and the arguments necessary to get action of any kind are well known. Why was there all that delay? Again only one answer is possible—Fear on the part of someone of losing votes.

## THE CITIZENS' LEAGUE AND ITS ORIGIN.

Finally we have to-day the spectacle of a "Citizens' League" campaigning for the restoration of the name of Berlin, modifying this, under-pressure, by an intimation that no action will be taken until after the war. What is the genesis of the Citizens' League? It was born and nurtured in the association headquarters in Kitchener of the party which has the enthusiastic support of the Toronto Telegram. Little chance has it of ever achieving its primary object, but as long as it remains in being it will possess a certain capacity for mischief. If it is bold, and bold it certainly has been in its campaign to date, it is because its members have found in the past that boldness with Canadian authorities paid.

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## Machine At Its Back.

According to statements by members of the British League, and indeed according to generally accepted report, the "Citizens" League was organized by, leading Conservative organizers; it had the Conservative machine in the city at its back for election purposes, and its meetings were held in the Borden Club room, the Conservative headquarters.

The British League claims to be absolutely non-political, their sole aim being the furtherance of British sentiment and of everything that will contribute to the victory of the allies. Their executive committee, according to Mr. C. C. Hahn, is composed of 4 Conservatives, 3 Liberals and 1 Independent, all of whom have absolutely given up all thought of politics.

Among the chief workers and organizers for the Citizens' League in the recent election, according to the executive committee of the British League, were Ed. Scully and Mike Ross, two of the principal Conservative workers of the city; W. B. Utley, editor of the News-Record, a Conservative journal, and one of the new aldermen, and Otto Fogelsang, president of the Borden Club.

## Politics At Bottom.

"Yes, certainly politics are at the root of the whole trouble," stated Mr. S. J. Williams, one of Kitchener's leading citizens, and a well-known Conservative, who is on the Executive Committee of the British League. "There never was any registration of alien enemies here until after February last year, when an alien was discovered in a factory practising with a home-made bomb, after which they interned him and three or four others and registered about 700 alien enemies. You know, the Council had already made three applications to the Minister of Justice without result, but I went to Ottawa then myself and interviewed both him and Col. Sherwood, Chief of the Dominion Police."

The City Council twice passed resolutions asking for registration and forwarded them to the Minister of Justice at Ottawa, but received no reply. It was only when they sent a very strenuous letter that any notice at all was taken.

In the following month, after Mr. S. J. Williams went down to Ottawa, Chief of Police O'Neill was furnished with the notices to post up and the proper machinery for carrying out the registration, and at present there are almost 900 registered.

## Mr. Weichel's Opinion.

The Star asked Mr. W. G. Weichel, M.P. for North Waterloo, why registration was not carried out in this district, and he replied: "There were only about seven registrars appointed in the whole of Canada. There was none in Windsor or Hamilton, yet in the latter place Magistrate Jelfs carried out registration thoroughly and effectively. The police magistrate and the Chief of Police had the power to do it here, as every other place."

Mr. Weichel denied that the ques-

tion of retaining the German vote for the Conservative party lay at the bottom of the neglect of the authorities to carry out the registration. "It had nothing to do with it," he declared. "The Germans are not all Conservatives. Lots are Liberals, especially among the Mennonites."

Of the part played by the Conservative organization in electing the nominees of the Citizens' League in the recent civic contest, Mr. Weichell said he knew nothing. "I did not meddle with the affairs of either league," he went on. "It was a purely civic fight, and it is Federal matters with which I am concerned. I played no part in it at all."

It will be noticed that the City Council asked three times that registration be carried out, and once, on May 17, 1915, respectfully suggested that the police magistrate be appointed registrar under the Order-in-Council of October 28, 1914. Yet it

was only last March that the chief of police received the notices to post up, and the book and other material necessary for carrying out registration.