

R. B. Russell, Winnipeg Strike Leader Found Guilty on Seven Counts by Unanimous Verdict

Jury Brings in Finding Thursday Morning—Prisoner Released in Order That He May Spend Christmas at His Home—Comes Up for Sentence Saturday—Case to Be Appealed.

Winnipeg, Dec. 24.—R. B. Russell, one of the eight strike leaders, was convicted today on a charge of seditious conspiracy, and committing a common nuisance. An unanimous verdict of guilty was returned by the jury on all seven counts in the indictment at 10.40 this morning. Russell will be brought up for sentence on Saturday at 10.30 a.m.

It was announced that the defence will appeal from the decision to the Manitoba Court of Appeal; the argument to take place as soon as possible.

Russell was allowed his freedom until Saturday morning, so that he could spend Christmas with his friends, and not behind iron bars. This is the first time in the memory of many of the oldest lawyers in Winnipeg, following a conviction, an accused has been allowed to remain free after the verdict of the jury. This was made possible by A. J. Andrews, K.C., crown prosecutor, who heartily seconded Robert Cassidy's request.

Before the court arose, John Hyniger, deputy sheriff, took his place, beside the prisoners' box prepared to take Russell into custody. He had not heard the ruling of the court. Russell demurred. The deputy sheriff asked the court if he was not to take the prisoner to jail.

"He is not in your clutches as yet. Mr. Hyniger, not until Saturday," said Mr. Justice Metcalfe, "you are right,

however, quite right; this is Christmas time."

The judge, counsel for the crown and the jury showed little personal elation at the successful conclusion of the prosecution.

Prisoner Unperturbed

A. J. Andrews, leading counsel for the crown, walked to where the accused sat in the box and put out his hand. Russell grasped it and shook it heartily.

lily. Russell did not flinch as the verdict was announced and at no time during the gruelling half hour when his fate was hanging in the balance did he by the slightest tremor of a muscle betray nervousness. The incoming jury, the unanimous verdict against him, the decision to let him free until after Christmas, failed to arouse him from his state of indifference.

The court room was crowded to the door, and as if acting on common impulse the spectators stood up as the jury filed in. They remained standing and the proceedings of the court finished amid a dense silence. All left the court room in an orderly manner, and separated in the hall into excited groups to re-fight the battle of the jury.

Judge's Charge.

His lordship, in his charge, quoted definitions of seditious conspiracy; stated that the accused should receive the benefit if the jury found that Russell's intentions were bona fide, that he had no malicious motives and no guilty mind.

It would have to be shown in the evidence that there was a common design, he said; otherwise there was not a conspiracy. The act of a conspirator prior to the time he and the accused met was evidence against the accused. If they found the accused and others banded together for an illegal purpose, then any act by one of the party with reference to the common object was evidence against any of the others engaged.

Dealing with letters written by Russell or received by him, his lordship said there was evidence that Russell assisted in getting control of the labor temple. It was hard to forget Russell's letters, with their nice, short, crisp sentences: such as, for instance, "knock hell out of the Labor party," he said.

Russell was connected with the Socialist party which was responsible for distribution of Socialist literature. Referring to this propaganda, the judge said:

"I have seen altogether too much of it."

Dealing with William Ivens, another of the accused strike leaders, his lordship said he was the editor of the Western Labor News and possibly the jury might find that sufficient to show that the propaganda was seditious.

Some of the "Reds."

Armstrong, one of the accused, the judge stated, was, according to evidence, a soap box orator and a Red, who, with Russell and others, gained control of the Trades and Labor council; Queen also was responsible for propaganda distribution at a theatre meeting, and has aided and abetted the strike. W. A. Pritchard had been called one of the most active speakers and workers in the Socialistic cause and had issued propaganda for the One Big Union. He stated that Johns was another of the reds who had gained control of the Trades and La-

bor council, and a delegate to the Calgary convention.

"As for Robinson," went on the judge, "like rancid butter in the mouth which leaves a bad taste is the evidence of Robinson, secretary of the strike committee. Robinson had tried to disclaim responsibility for everything, swore that he did his duty as an alderman by the city at large.

Somehow it did not sound very well from him. Robinson did his duty to the strike committee. R. E. Bray, said the judge, was not serving two masters. He led returned soldiers who were strike sympathizers."