

TELLS OF MEETINGS AT MAJESTIC THEATRE

Strong Feeling Against Gov- ernment and in Support of Soviet Rule

Further evidence was given Saturday at the trial of F. J. Dixon, M.L.A., before Mr. Justice Galt, the accused conducting his own defence unassisted by any legal adviser.

Ben Batsford, cartoonist for the Free Press, testified that he had attended the meeting held at the Majestic theatre, Jan. 19, 1919, and gave evidence as to the rioting that took place a week later.

The principal speakers at the Majestic theatre meeting, witness said, were R. B. Russell, R. J. Johns, Geo. Armstrong and Sam Blumenberg, the general trend of the speeches being a warning to the audience that a revolution was coming in this country. Armstrong, he said, spoke on financial affairs, and said that during the war there had been much exploiting of finances. He had then spoken in support of soviet Russia, condemned the press for suppressing all the true facts about the Russian situation, and predicted that Bolshevism would spread all over the world. These utterances, witness said, were received by the audience with applause and jeers.

In reply to a question by Hugh Phillpotts, K.C., counsel for the crown, witness said that there had been divergent views expressed by Johns and Blumenberg as to what sort of revolution it would be. Johns predicted a bloodless revolution, which would be brought about by paralyzing the wheels of industry, forcing the capitalists to submit without demur. Blumenberg, on the other hand, declared that much blood would be split.

A copy of the Socialist Bulletin was identified by the witness as a similar copy to the one which he had purchased on coming out of the meeting and was put in as evidence and marked "Exhibit No. 7." Mr. Phillpotts read certain articles from this

issue to the jury. These condemned the government and the press, and were loud in their praise of soviet Russia.

The witness then gave evidence on the riot at the Swift Canadian plant about a week later, telling how aliens employed there had been made to come out and kiss the Union Jack, and how the various places of business conducted by aliens had been wrecked.

Witness Cross-Examined

Cross-examined by Dixon, witness said that so far as he knew, the accused had had no connection with the meeting at the Majestic theatre. He had not seen him there, had not heard any articles purported to have been written by him read, and had not heard any reference made to him.

Witness told Dixon he had heard him speak at various political meetings in Winnipeg. When he had first heard him speak he knew that he was a Liberal. Later, he had been led to believe from his public utterances that he was a moderate supporter of Labor, and on the last few occasions he had been forced to the conclusion, not without regret, that Dixon had left the ranks of the moderates for those of the extremists. The witness said that he had often attended political meetings and had often heard one political party attack another, sometimes rather bitterly, but had never heard the mention of one party received by the other with jeers as had been the case at the meeting at the Majestic theatre.

In a brief re-examination, Mr. Phillips referred to this meeting and took the witness over the ground again. Witness said that he had never heard one political party jeer at the mention of another in public meetings. At this particular meeting, however, the feeling of the audience seemed to be particularly envenomed against the government and the capitalists, and very strongly in favor of soviet government.

Reporter Gives Evidence

Cecil Lamont, a reporter for the Winnipeg Telegram, called by Mr. Phillips, testified that he had been at the meeting held at the Walker theatre on Dec. 22, 1918. He had seen John Queen, R. B. Russell, Rev. Wm. Ivens and George Armstrong there, but could not say whether or not Dixon was present.

The witness testified that he had last seen John Queen, who was chairman at the Walker theatre

meeting, under trial in assize court No. 1. He had also seen in that court Rev. Wm Ivens and Geo. Armstrong, who were facing similar charges. He had last seen R. H. Russell in court at the time of his trial.

Mr. Dixon objected to this form of evidence, because he said it was not relevant to this case and because this court was not concerned with what was taking place in other courts. Mr. Phillipps stated that he wished to show that this evidence had a direct connection with the Calgary convention which he intended to bring up later, and in which it would be shown who were

present from Winnipeg on that occasion.

Judge Admits Evidence

The witness said that he had come to the Walker theatre meeting late and had not heard the first speakers, but had got the resolutions after the meeting was over from R. B. Russell and was told who moved the resolutions and who seconded them. Dixon objected to the putting in of this evidence, which he characterized as hearsay. After a lengthy argument, Mr. Justice Galt admitted the evidence.

A copy of the Western Labor News, dated Dec. 27, 1919, containing a report of the meeting at the

Walker theatre, was put in as evidence for the crown and this concluded Mr. Phillipps' examination of the witness.

In cross-examination Dixon attempted to engage the witness in a discussion regarding government by order-in-council. Crown counsel objected and the objection was sustained.