

WILFRID GRIBBLE SENT BACK TO JAIL ON SEDITION CHARGES; MAGISTRATE REFUSED BAIL

Socialist Orator arraigned in Police Court—George H. Worden tells about Gribble's meeting and the alleged seditious utterances—Interesting evidence illustrates Gribble's opinion of recruits.

Wilfrid Gribble, the Socialist orator, charged with sedition, spent last night in jail, application of his counsel for bail being unsuccessful.

Gribble, who was arrested on Tuesday night, was brought into the police court at 10 o'clock yesterday morning but as Mr. Worden, the complainant in the case, was not present, was remanded until the afternoon. At the afternoon session the evidence of the complainant was taken and at the request of Inspector Wickham the prisoner was further remanded until the prosecution has secured additional witnesses. There was a sharp argument between the Magistrate and Gribble's counsel on the question of bail, but the Magistrate refused to entertain any application and the prisoner was sent back to the cells. The case will be resumed this afternoon at 2 o'clock. Quite a large number of spectators were in court yesterday, including Socialists and socialist sympathizers.

The information.

The information in the case, laid by George H. Worden is as follows:

"Information of George H. Worden, for, that on the 5th inst, this deponent was present at a public meeting in a hall at 54 Union street, in the city of St. John, presided over by a man named Carney, who, in his address to the meeting said he had just finished serving a term in prison for speaking against recruits for soldiers, as carried on now in the Empire. The said Carney then introduced to the meeting one Wilfrid Gribble, who arose and addressed the audience discouraging the idea of recruiting and in the course of his remarks uttered seditious words, saying that the King of England was a puppet, that the recruiting motto now used is 'The King and Country Need You' but 'my' (Gribble's) motto is 'The King and Country Bleed You,' and other words of a like character contrary to the statute."

Dr. Daniel Mullin, K. C., and A. H. Hannington, K. C., appeared for the prisoner.

At the afternoon session the complainant, George H. Worden, was called the witness. He testified as follows:

Mr. Worden's Evidence.

"I am a carpenter by trade, fifty years of age, reside at present at 55 Hazen street, and have been a resident of St. John for forty years. On Sunday night last, at 8.15 o'clock, I went to a hall at 54 Union street. The hall is upstairs in the building. A collection was taken up after the speaker was through. There were about thirty or thirty-five persons at the meeting, among whom were about half a dozen women. There was a man presiding who, I learned, was named Carney. He opened the meeting with a little talk saying that he had 'just done three months service in prison for talking against recruiting on the other side.' He said he was fined and put in prison, had just got out and came across here."

"The chairman then introduced the speaker, Mr. Gribble, who came forward and addressed the meeting. He spoke against the clergymen of the city."

Dr. Mullin here objected but the Magistrate did not allow the objection and the witness proceeded.

What Gribble Said.

"The speaker said that the clergymen had no right to speak at recruiting meetings, inciting the people, and he described the clergymen as men who 'go round with a collar fastened on backwards.' The recruiting motto, he said, was 'The King and Country need you,' while Gribble gave as his motto 'The King and Country bleed you.' Gribble spoke for about an hour. He called King George a 'Puppet.' It was after he said the King and country bleed you that he said the King was a 'Puppet.' Gribble went on to say: 'It is as well to be a German slave as a slave of Britain.' Other sections of Gribble's discourse were against the capitalists; he described capitalists as 'men with high hats who walked into places.'"

"At the close of his address Gribble invited members in the audience to ask questions. A Mr. Taylor asked if it was the best men who go to the front, as he thought that they were not. In answer Gribble said that some men were compelled to go. One man, who belonged to the order, he saw in St. John; this man was from Vancouver, and he asked him: 'Why are you in uniform?' and said that it was against our constitution."

Applauded Gribble's Attack.

"The meeting on Sunday night had been advertised as a Socialist meeting, and a meeting held Tuesday night was also advertised in the same way. When Gribble said that the King was a 'Puppet,' some of those present in the audience applauded. When he said the words: 'The King and country bleed you,' witness said that he could not say about applause at that time but there was applause frequently."

"When Gribble answered Taylor's question, he said that the man from Vancouver was in uniform. He was a private and was with an officer at the time. The two met, Col. McAvity, and the private saluted the colonel, but the officer did not. The officer

remarked that he didn't notice that kind of a man, and continuing, said that when he got to the front if there was a cover, there he would get behind it and would come back with a whole skin. Gribble said that the recruits who went across were no good to 'our order,' and 'we can't trust them.'"

In Cross-Examination.

To Dr. Mullin—"I belong to St. John. I am a carpenter and a married man. I'm not a socialist, and not interested. I attended a socialist meeting about two years ago. I heard about Gribble and of him marrying Mrs. Curry, and that he was in the same business as I am, and I saw the building he put up in the country. It was only through curiosity that I went to the meeting. I knew some of the persons present, but not by name. I know Taylor, the man who asked the question, as a silver-plater on King Square. I felt rather out of place on entering the hall as I was a stranger there."

"I did not write a letter to Mayor Frink about the meeting. I told him what was going on there and he wrote it down. This was on Tuesday forenoon. Gribble used the word about the King being a 'puppet' when he was talking about the clergy, and 'You might as well be a German slave as a slave under British rule.' Gribble did not explain the meaning of the word 'puppet.'"

Mr. Mullin—"Did you understand when he used the word 'puppet,' to mean that the King was a figurehead?"

Witness—"I didn't think of it that way, but that he was talking against the King and country."

Applauded Are Liable.

The Magistrate said that according to the British law, where people are seditious in their remarks, those who applaud are just as liable as those who utter the remarks.

This finished the examination of the witness and as the Magistrate put the oath to witness for his recognition to appear at the setting of the court if wanted, he used the words: "You promise to owe our sovereign Lord the King, etc." His Honor emphasized that it meant "King George V."

Inspector Wickham of the Police department then asked the court for a remand of the prisoner, as he was trying to locate other witnesses.

Mr. Hannington then enquired as to the court accepting bail for the prisoner's appearance when required and said that in no case is bail absolutely refused, except in case of felony, but in a case of misdemeanor, bail can be accepted at any time.

Dr. Mullin said that the court could grant bail on a remand.

The Question of Bail.

The Magistrate said that bail could not be granted until the preliminary hearing was concluded, and then only when the Magistrate thought there was not a strong presumption of guilt.

Mr. Hannington—"Your Honor I will just read you a section from the code."

The Magistrate—"My code is over at my home, and I am quite familiar with it; so much that I almost sleep with it, but if you wish to take up time read it."

Mr. Hannington—"You ought not to accuse me of taking up time. I never do, and I respect your honor. I think you have power to grant bail. If Gribble did say what he has been quoted as saying; I think a wrong impression has been put on it, but even if he did say it, I think that bail could be granted, in all due fairness and public interest, as where a respectable man is in custody, I might say that all the newspapers published a piece about King George recently and thought it was a joke, but it was just as bad as what the defendant said."

PARALYSED AND HELPLESS

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The Magistrate—"I think the code is perfectly clear. I know what our practice is, that after all the evidence is in, and if I see not a strong presumption of guilt. I accept bail instead of sending him into jail."

Mr. Hannington—"Then your wrong."

The Magistrate—"Then we have been drifting wrong for the past twenty-six years, and I expect to be here ten years longer."

Mr. Hannington—"Well let us start right today. If I undertake to have the man here when wanted, and give proper bail, will you not accept it?"

The Magistrate—"No."

Dr. Mullin—"This case is one that is ballable. Is it not only one of misdemeanor. Your Honor, in your discretion and duty under the law can admit the man to bail, and you cannot ask for an excessive bail. If Your Honor wants to send him up on the evidence so far advanced, send him up, and we won't ask Your Honor for bail."

The Magistrate—"Well now that this has been all talked over, when will it be suitable to take the case up again. Will two o'clock tomorrow afternoon suit?"

Mr. Mullin—"Will you refuse bail?"

The Magistrate—"I don't even entertain."

Mr. Mullin—"Then refuse."

It was then decided to adjourn the hearing until this afternoon at two o'clock, and the prisoner was again remanded to jail. Before he left the court the prisoner said, "It will be alright, another night won't hurt me, although you know that I am a poor sleeper."

Mr. Mullin—"Then refuse."

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CHARGES FALL THROUGH WHEN BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION

Allegations made by James Acton that Real Estate man made huge profits by sub-letting contract for clothing, proved absolutely groundless.

Ottawa, Dec. 7.—The charge of Mr. James Acton in "Men's Wear," a Toronto trade publication, that a Toronto real estate man made a profit of \$22,000 out of a clothing contract secured from the government completely collapsed when he was faced by Sir Charles Davidson this afternoon.

Mr. Acton made two charges: First, that Mr. Hopkins made a profit of \$22,000 by sub-letting to the Empire Clothing Co.; second, that the contract was secured through a member of parliament. The charges were repeated in the Liberal Press throughout the country.

It was shown directly by the files of the Militia Department and war purchasing commission that no such contract had been let.

Mr. Acton was asked directly who was the member of parliament to whom he referred.

"I had no member of parliament in mind," he replied. "I just inferred that a member of parliament was involved."

After hearing the evidence of Mr. H. W. Brown, Director of Contracts for the militia department, Mr. Acton volunteered the statement, "If the department says that no such contract was placed by the government, I am quite willing to accept their word. I will admit that we were mistaken."

Sir Charles Davidson was evidently provoked at the lack of information upon which Mr. Acton had based his allegations. He remarked, "but you have made serious allegations against the integrity and honor of public men. This is no time for light speaking."

Again Sir Charles remarked: "You give me the impression of having made somewhat reckless assertions, without taking any particular steps to rectify them." This was referring to the fact that he had not published the denial of Hon. A. E. Kemp.

Mr. Acton in his charge said that this was only one of many instances. He was asked directly if he knew of any other cases of such sub-contracts. Mr. Acton admitted that he knew of no other cases.

Mr. Acton said that the basis for his charge was that a member of his firm had seen an insurance policy held by Mr. Hopkins covering profits of \$22,000.

It was intimated in the course of the inquiry that it was likely a British contract he had in mind. One thing was positively proven, that no Canadian contract was let to Mr. Hopkins, although in August the Empire Clothing Co. secured a contract direct for 12,000 pairs trousers, being one of twelve lowest tenders.

Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Parks and the Empire Clothing Company owners will be heard on Thursday.

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