

MRS. STRICKERT FREED BY JURY

Acquitted on Charge of Poisoning
Her Husband

DEATH STILL A MYSTERY

Verdict Says Deceased Did Not
Die by His Own Hand

STRAITFORD, Oct. 27.—(Special to The Free Press).—At 10.30 to-night the jury returned a verdict acquitting Mrs. Margaret Strickert of the murder of her husband, Wm. Strickert, on July 16. The verdict read: "We, the jury empaneled in the case of the King versus Margaret Strickert, do submit to your lordship a verdict of acquittal. While we feel that the deceased Wm. Strickert did not come to his death by his own hand we also feel that the evidence was not conclusive enough to convict the prisoner."

Mr. Justice Lennox concurred in the verdict, declaring that the case had been the most puzzling in his career on the bench. Addressing Mrs. Strickert he said that, while the evidence had pointed strongly to guilt, the jury had done wisely in reaching the verdict quoted. A fervent "Thank God" by the accused woman followed her acquittal and she was affectionately greeted by her married daughter and numerous friends in the courtroom.

Following argument by counsel the court adjourned at 6 o'clock, resuming at 7.30, when his lordship addressed the jury for an hour, the case going to the jurors at 8.30.

A DIFFICULT CASE.

In his charge to the jury Judge Lennox stated that it was an unusual and difficult case and that, while it was only human nature for a jury to be reluctant about convicting a woman of murder, this fact should not be allowed to influence the jurors.

That Strickert had been poisoned was not disputed, nor was there any suggestion of accident in the administration of the strychnine. This meant, his lordship pointed out, that the only avenue for acquittal lay in the theory of suicide, with which crime the defense had sought to link the abominable offense of seduction of Pearl Strickert by her own father. The only evidence to this latter effort was that of the girl herself, and she had not impressed his lordship as a reliable witness. It was more natural to suppose that George Currie, with whom she had kept company, was her seducer, Judge Lennox submitted, and he commented on the fact that Currie had not been called as a witness.

His lordship said he found no evidence of any intimidation by Constable Kirby and Provincial Officer Arthur Palmer and he termed Mrs. Strickert's straightforward evidence in the witness box as "remarkably good," an element to be considered by the jury in weighing the evidence. The judge explained to the jury that to convict there must be a preponderance of evidence in support of the theory of murder as against that of suicide.

DEFINITE DENIAL.
Beginning this afternoon's session Mrs. Strickert was recalled to the stand to deal more extensively with Mrs. Seiler's evidence. She denied telling Mrs. Seiler that her husband didn't use "right or that," "she wished him dead" and that "he was going to get the dose."

"Did you poison your husband?" asked Mr. Thompson.
"No, I didn't," replied Mrs. Strickert.
"Do you know anything about anyone poisoning him?"
"No, I do not, as sure as the Lord is in the heavens," replied the accused woman.

Mrs. Elizabeth Wivel, daughter of Mr. Strickert and elder sister of Pearl Strickert, was called to give evidence as to the conduct of the late Mr. Strickert toward his daughters.

Mr. Picheu objected that the evidence was not relevant to the case.
His lordship said he would hear the counsel and ordered the jury to retire while he heard the argument. He ruled out the evidence.

This concluded the defense.

GOOD PRICES AT SALE OF STOCK

Live Stock Breeders and Farmers
at Guelph Auction

\$610 HIGH PRICE PAID

Fat Cattle Range From 8 to 11 1/4 Cents

GUELPH, Oct. 27.—Live stock breeders and farmers from all over Ontario attended the annual sale of surplus live stock at the Ontario Agricultural College this afternoon. The sale was not as large as for several years past, but the quality of the stock offered was fully up to the standard of other years.

W. A. Dryden, the well-known live stock man from Brooklyn, Ont., paid the top price of the sale for a two-year-old heifer, College Augustus 8th, giving his check for \$610 for this fine Augustus heifer, a breed that has made the Ontario agricultural stock famous throughout the Dominion. Mr. Dryden also paid \$600 for the yearling Demale Augustus O. A. C. 6th.

John Miller, of Ashburn, paid \$600 for the three-year-old heifer Lavender O. A. C. 3rd, one of the Proud Demand stock.

The rest of the stock sold at prices which were satisfactory in every respect to the college authorities. A number of fat cattle were offered and sold at prices ranging from 8 to 11 1/4 cents per pound. There was also a large consignment of sheep and hogs, which sold for breeding purposes, but which did not bring any fancy prices.

REFERENDUM AND RECALL ILLEGAL

Ottawa Authority Says Candidate
Who Signs Jeopardizes Seat.

OTTAWA, Oct. 27.—(Special to The Free Press).—That the initiative referendum and recall, as advertised, and in part put into effect in the case of many former candidates, both in the West and in Ontario, is illegal, unconstitutional and generally null and void, is the opinion of Alexander Smith, the well-known barrister and constitutional authority, of this city. He points out that the illegality of the principle was decided by the Privy Council when it upheld a judgment of the Manitoba Appeal Court in regard to an initiative and referendum Act passed by the Legislature of that province. The British constitutional principle is that Parliament makes the laws, and it is competent to pass on the principle of which the people shall be asked to adopt by a referendum as they have done repeatedly with the Scott Act.

THE RECALL.

The recall, Mr. Smith holds, is equally as illegal as the referendum. He maintains that the man who signs a pledge to resign on demand is representing only the committee which holds this pledge, and furthermore, that the signing of such a pledge may be illegal on the ground that it is a promise to do something to secure election.

The B. N. A. Act does not recognize any such committee or other informal body. The laws of Canada are made by Parliament, and Mr. Smith says in a memorandum on the subject that such written pledges may be contrary to the specific spirit of the Election Act, as well as being unconstitutional under section 91 of the B. N. A. Act.

"It may well be," he adds, "that a candidate who allows to exist such a written statement of his incoherence cannot be legally elected. If Parliament enacted a Recall Act it would be unconstitutional and ineffective just as the Manitoba law was. The recall is not only null and void, but dangerous to the candidate who signs it."

CATCH LIQUOR RING HEAD.

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., Oct. 28.—The arrest of W. J. Harrington, a cafe proprietor, by federal authorities yesterday laid to rest the head of an alleged liquor smuggling ring that has been bringing whisky valued at more than \$500,000 into the state from British Columbia.

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