

Martyrdom in Canada

For Those Who Believe the Truth Shall Make Men Free.

Jack Reid, 18 months.
John Ness, 30 days.
Wilfred Gribble, 3 months.
Issaac Bainbridge, 9 months.
Pte. Harry Lee (charged with disloyalty).
Miss Anna Held (charged with disloyalty).

F. J. Wetzel, now under arrest.
We are fighting to make this world safe for democracy. In the fight many of our comrades have spent some considerable time behind prison bars. The French Canadians talk of the treatment in Ontario, but that is only a flea-bite compared with the treatment of the Socialist minority in this Province. Take for instance Toronto; the Socialists dare not hold meetings in the streets; if we do the Conservative newspapers incite the soldiers to break them up.

The one great avenue for educating the public which has been recognized by the old countrymen for years, that is, the right of free speech in the public parks, which is denied to the Socialists in Toronto.

The editor of this paper has been put in jail for taking the same position as Lloyd George did in his recent speech on war aims.

If Lloyd George had delivered the same speech in Toronto he would have been behind prison bars to-day.

Even the Labor paper, The Industrial Banner, has never mentioned about the imprisonment of Mr. Bainbridge, perhaps through fear of what would happen, for the paper is also published in Toronto. An attempt is now being made to route out of the teaching staff of public schools anyone that is known to have Socialistic leanings. The Telegram of January 18, 1918, declaring "That Toronto must fight against the danger of being Russified by the neutralization that would encourage dreamers or screamers to go on teaching pacifism in the schools." This is no new method; it is only a short time ago since a Socialist school teacher had to stand a charge of disloyalty because of his political affiliations, and gave the lie to his detractors by finally giving his life on the fields of Flanders. Now this week another school teacher has given in her resignation because of persecution. We reproduce the following extracts of the case from the Toronto Star:

Miss Frieda Held, teacher in Carlton Public school, whose loyalty to British ideals has been under investigation for some weeks by a committee of the Board of Education, has resigned.

The announcement of her resignation was made officially by Chairman G. J. Steele to-day in the following statement:

"The committee of the board, as named under the statutes, has partially investigated certain allegations made against one of the teachers, but has not arrived at any conclusion, and to-day I received a letter from her asking that her resignation be accepted."

Miss Held's letter of resignation to Dr. Steele is as follows:

"I beg to offer through you my resignation from Carlton school, to take effect Feb. 28. Since my loyalty has been questioned I feel that any effective work I might have done with children and parents at Carlton school has been denied me. Since the best only is my desire with regard to my work, I am afraid that this is impossible while there is doubt as to my loyalty. I trust that under the circumstances my resignation will be accepted."

To The Star to-day Miss Held issued the following statement: "Since they have questioned my loyalty, any efficient work I might do has been denied me, and, moreover, I was in the work because I loved it and wanted to do my best at it.

"I felt that this was no longer possible, so I handed in my resignation. I felt that some of the members of the investigation board gave me a very fair hearing, but that Mr. Armstrong's attitude made it impossible for me to teach in his inspectorate."

Dr. Steele's Statement.

As there has been no little interest shown in Miss Held's case, The Star asked Chairman Steele to-day to explain exactly the position of affairs at the present time.

The following conversation took place between Dr. Steele and The Star:

Q. What do you think should be done with the resignation? A. I think we ought to allow her request, but it will have to come before the board. I have nothing further to say in the matter.

Q. Will not the public think she is stepping out because there is something in the charges against her? A. No, I hardly think so. Since some of the teachers and some of the people think she is not what she ought to be as a teacher, the effectiveness of her work has been questioned, and she would rather resign than say anything.

No Further Investigation.

Q. Do you think there will be any further investigation? A. The incident is closed.

Q. Do you think the Board has acted fairly? A. Yes, I think so. Q. Have you discovered anything in her attitude which you would say is pro-German? A. I should say "no."

Q. Well, then, what is it that is against her, is it Socialism? A. Not exactly Socialism. We all believe in Socialism to a certain extent, but the Socialism must not be carried to such an extent that it is anti-British.

Q. Well, has it been in this case? A. That is the part I do not want to go into. I would not like to do anything to hurt her in her life-work in any way.

No Proof of Disloyalty.

Q. You say you haven't found anything which would savor of disloyalty? A. What I do say is, we haven't anything proven that she is pro-German.

Q. Well, have you anything to suggest that she is disloyal? A. No. I haven't anything to prove that she is disloyal.

We have not decided this case, as the investigation is only partially complete. We were intending to complete the investigation, but Miss Held, by resigning, of her own free will and accord, has prevented us from doing so.

Have Only Allegations.

Q. Have you discovered anything outside the allegations? A. No, not yet. We have nothing outside the allegations, but we have intended to inquire into Miss Held's conduct outside the school.

Q. Do you think you are a little unfair? A. No, not a bit. If I were, I would come out and make public our investigation. Her resignation can do her no good and no harm. The board has acted fairly. No injustice has been done. I would not allow any injustice.

Q. What was the nature of the investigation? A. There were quite a number of witnesses, some were school teachers and some were not.

Allegations Withdrawn.

Q. Did a teacher withdraw any of the allegations she made against Miss Held? A. No, we withdrew them for her. The phrase has been used, "that's the country you're fighting for." The committee decided that this might be taken in a favorable or an unfavorable light, according to the context, and withdrew it.

Q. It has been suggested that some of the teachers at Carlton school have been talking Socialism outside of school hours? A. It has not been mentioned in that way exactly. Some say they are pacifists. That is the ground for the hint at socialism.

Q. Will any further action be taken? A. No, not if they keep quiet. There will be no further investigation.

Q. It has been suggested that the only thing the board really has against Miss Held is that she refused to sing the second verse of the National Anthem, and that she said she would appeal to the board rather than do so? A. No this is not the case.

Regarding Miss Held's attitude toward the "hate verse" of the National Anthem, Chief Inspector Cowley pointed out to her during the inquiry that the regulations of the Education Department of Ontario called for its use in the schools. "She absolutely refused to use it. She said she would appeal to the board rather than use it in her class," said Dr. Steele.

Trustees Dr. Hopkins, who attended the early sessions of the probe, told The Star that Miss Held objected to the lines:

"Scatter our enemies,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
Confound their politics."

but he could not understand why she refused to sing those, if she could sincerely sing the first verse, which says:

"Send him victorious."

"How could the king be victorious unless his enemies were scattered?" queries the trustee.

Inspector G. H. Armstrong refused to make any comment on the case, pending a decision being given.

Chairman Steele said there was no question of Miss Held having told her class that it was England's oppression of Ireland that had caused the Irish revolt. "As no definite date was stated to this, it might be taken to apply even to the recent Sinn Fein rebellion," said he.

Another Statement of the Case.

The whole facts of the case were put before a man of much experience in educational matters to-day, and he was asked to give his impression of the investigation. This he did in the following statement, which was submitted to Miss Held, and she guaranteed its accuracy:

"My impression is," was the answer, "that every single charge has broken down except the one that the teacher refused, on religious grounds, to sing the second verse of the National Anthem, which is:

"O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter our enemies,
And make them fall.
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Him our hopes we fix;
God save us all."

"Now, the advisability of using this verse has been debated at church synods and its use has been declined by the vast majority of Christian clergymen ever since the National Anthem came into use. In at least one Province in Canada it is omitted from the school books altogether. It has always been regarded by the refined conscience of the churches as partaking of the nature of a hymn of hate and as poor in literary and lyric quality. The teacher is instructed to teach the National Anthem, but nowhere is it said that she must teach the whole of it, and, as you know, when the National

Anthem is sung in assemblies it is the first verse only that is sung in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. In St. James' Cathedral on the day of the King's call to prayer the first and third verses only were sung. If the teacher sang the first and last verses I consider that she well covered her duty. She was asked if she thought she was the only Christian teacher in Toronto and if her conscience was better than the consciences of the whole body of divines of the Empire. I consider this was an improper way of examining the teacher and that the question was not based upon facts, because there is abundance of evidence that the conscience of the clergy has been offended by this verse of the National Anthem.

"The most damaging of the other charges was withdrawn by the teacher who laid it. She said that the disloyal remark was made by somebody else, and thereby showed an irresponsibility that should have discounted anything she said.

"One of the investigators charged the teacher with implicit disloyalty for telling the story of Tom Moore's famous Irish poem, 'The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall.' She proved that she had used the notes provided by the Department of Education, read them to the investigating committee, and showed that she had not departed from her instructions by a hair's breadth. She was asked if she knew that Tom Moore was a Sinn Feiner. She said she did not, and was called an ignorant girl for not knowing it. Well, it so happens that Tom Moore was in his grave half a century before Sinn Feinism was heard of. She said she had obeyed her instructions, whereupon she was told that those instructions had been compiled by pro-German influence.

Born in England, Parents German.

"She said that she was born in England, though of German parents, and did not know one word of German. She was secretary of the School Patriotic League, and had friends in the trenches, and had not an atom of sympathy with German aims, yet she was treated with indignant surprise because she did not know she was a German citizen and did not know the laws of her own country—meaning Germany—which was again begging the question and treating the teacher unfairly.

"In my judgment the teacher is one of the most capable teachers on the Toronto staff, and to dismiss her would be a piece of gross injustice. I don't know what the women members of the School Board are doing or whether they are to have a say in the matter. It looks as if the whole thing was being done in a hole-and-corner, but the board members should know that they are representatives of the people who elected them, and not autocrats.

"There were some questions put to the other teachers that are quite indefensible in my judgment. They were asked if they had read Socialistic books and if they had Socialistic leanings, as if that were a crime. The undignified phrase 'Dirty German Socialism' was used in the prosecution. Now Socialism is a branch of economic philosophy that every university student has to study, and it is perfectly childlike to try to frighten teachers away from the study of Socialism as if it were a misdemeanor. Moreover, anybody with open mind must know that a vast amount of the most important legislation of the Empire in the recent times has been essentially Socialistic. Sir William Harcourt said twenty years ago: 'We are all Socialists now.' A prominent minister of the Presbyterian Church said in criticizing Socialism philosophically:

(Continued on Page 8.)