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### Sensational Charges Against Supt. J. G. Alderman

(continued from page 1)

Mr. Berryman—The purpose of this meeting is to make some investigation as to some alleged statements; that is to say, it has been alleged that our county superintendent has made some disloyal statements. A great many of the men here this afternoon will have something to say and we want to be able to have everything put down so that everybody will know what is said. Certain men have made statements that they have heard statements of our superintendent and that is the purpose of this meeting.

Mr. Pruden—Gentlemen of the Board of Education, after what has been said by your chairman I think it well that I should make a few remarks. For a long time it has been brought to our attention and to the attention of almost everybody who hears me, and especially the attention of the Committee of Public Defense, of which I am one, that Mr. Alderman, your superintendent, has been so conducting himself as to discourage the war, to prevent as far as possible the accomplishment of the draft and in many ways to throw discredit upon the prosecution of the war. I have not asked a meeting, but when your chairman came to me a week or two ago, he asked me to be present at a meeting of the Board of Education. I would like to tell him that I could not be there as I had engagements that took me elsewhere and I should be glad if possible if the meeting be called for this Monday. That was satisfactory and thereupon I wrote to Mr. Welsh and Mr. Savage that I desired them to be present here today. I have not, however, any specific charges to make myself, because I know nothing myself, but I have heard of a great many remarks by Mr. Alderman and a great deal of conduct that was not fitting for a citizen of the United States, but above all, was not fitting for a citizen holding a public office; and conduct not fit and words not fit to be spoken by a man at the head of the schools of the county whose word is powerful in its effect upon children and whose word can do and has done great harm, and I felt that this meeting was a proper thing. I have not been informed just what are the matters to be investigated, but I have jotted down upon a piece of paper several things that to my mind appear to be, if not disloyal (and I do not like to use so strong a word) at least, indifferent towards the success of the war and to the success of the United States.

The first thing is his frequent conversations with drafted men after war had been declared and after the proclamation of the president. There can be no doubt from the information that I have that Mr. Alderman talked to drafted men on different occasions, pronounced the draft law unconstitutional and stated that these men would not have to go to defend the country in France. We think we can find witnesses who heard something of that sort.

In conversation with Mr. Burton he expressed sentiments that were disloyal.

Another thing is a recent address or sermon preached by him at a church in which he expressed sentiments that certainly ought not to have been expressed by a patriotic citizen and by a man occupying the position which he holds.

Another thing is that I have heard that he has taken a vote from the school children as to the propriety of the war. I do not know about this but there may be witnesses.

Another thing is that when he was lecturing, and very properly lecturing, teachers upon some lines of practical work, the subject came up of the sending of telegrams and he told the children of his telegram to Mr. Kitchin in regard to the war. I was not there, but this was told to me.

Finally, an act of Mr. Alderman during the draft in coming to this Court House and carrying from the Court House the official list which had been placed there to notify the people.

These are things that ought to be investigated. I have said that this meeting was not called at my instance, but I think it was proper that it should be called, but for some

one might think that was an apology on my part for being here, I want to say that while I have sustained Mr. Alderman in his office and have for many years been his friend in office, I want to say now that I am a citizen of this county, I hope I am a patriotic citizen, and as a citizen and a patriotic citizen I am willing to lead my efforts in bringing to light any offensiveness on the part of anybody; and in addition to being a citizen, I am a member of the Public Defense Committee and it is my duty to conduct any examination or to aid in the examination of any witnesses that this body may indicate.

Mr. Alderman—I do not know, gentlemen and ladies, whether a proper thing would be for me to speak here without any response on the part of the Board of Education or any one else, but if there is anything else to be said before I have anything to say I should like exceedingly to know that whole thing, because this is all news to me and I have been taken in the dark and I don't care to speak into the darkness until I know if there is anything else to be said.

I am absolutely willing to stand upon my feet, I am not afraid of the law, and I have nothing along that line—the line of the truth—to hide. Only let me know concretely if anything else is to be said and if you are ready for any statement on my part.

Mr. Pruden—As stated in the beginning the purpose of this meeting is only to make investigation into certain alleged statements. Recently there have come to my ears many statements, street talk—and it seemed to me that it was getting to the point where the truth ought to be known, and I want to state again that the only purpose of this meeting this afternoon is to make investigation and to find out if these alleged statements are true, and if there is anybody here who has heard any such statements as those that have come to my ears that have been made, I should be glad if you will make those statements here publicly at this time. I believe it is due the Supt. of Public Instruction of this County, it is due the citizenship of this County and of this State and the nation, and I repeat that if there are any witnesses here this afternoon who have heard such statements as have been alleged to have been made, I should be glad to hear you make these statements this afternoon.

Mr. E. W. Burton was sworn and testified:

Q. Mr. Burton, did you have a conversation with Mr. Alderman at any time concerning the war?

A. Well, during the rainy season, this summer, either the last of July or the first week in August, he came in the store, and I met him at the end of the show case and I remarked that it was a terrible thing, or the rain to be like it was, that it was bad for the farmers, and he says, "A pity! No, it isn't a pity." "Well," I said, "why do you say that?" "Well," he said, "it comes them right, it's a just judgment sent on them by the Almighty for going into this war against Germany." "Well," I said, "that's a strong view to take; I wouldn't talk that way." He said, "I wouldn't talk that way; I am the judge of what I should say and do." I didn't get angry, but I said, "You can think what you please, but I wouldn't say anything for your meat and bread depends on the farmers and it behooves you to keep quiet."

Q. Was there any other conversation?

A. No sir, that was all.

Cross-examination by Mr. Alderman.

Q. I have never been accustomed to examining folks, I am not a lawyer, and I know nothing about it. Mr. Burton, I sometimes have to ask you over or speak again in talking to you on account of your being a little deaf, is that not true?

A. (Mr. Burton misunderstood; answer was entirely irrelevant.)

Q. Mr. Burton, my question was this: do I not often have to speak a second time to get you to understand me?

A. Yes, sir; but this conversation went on without any break until you left the store; we were as close together as I am now to this lady.

Q. I just asked you a question which you misunderstood. So you admit that you do sometimes misunderstand me?

A. Yes, sir, I misunderstood every-

body who doesn't talk plain.

Q. You sometimes find that I don't talk plain?

A. You have a peculiar speech and people might misunderstand you.

Q. And don't you very frequently ask me over?

A. I can't say; I wouldn't say that I did or didn't, because I couldn't say.

Re-examination by Mr. Pruden.

Q. Mr. Burton, you say you were right close together. Did Mr. Alderman make the remark you have sworn to?

A. Yes, sir.

Re-examination by Mr. Alderman.

Q. Are you sure that I said going to war with the Germans or just going to war?

A. That is what I understood you to say.

Q. And you swear point blank that I said that it was a curse brought on them for going to war against the Germans?

A. You could not have meant anything else.

Q. Do you swear that I made that statement?

A. To the best of my knowledge and belief you did, because you were talking very loud and very excited.

Dr. E. J. Griffin was sworn and testified:

Q. Did you overhear at any time conversation or observations between Mr. Alderman or anybody else or remarks made by Mr. Alderman to anybody else about the draft?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please state what it was.

A. As near as I can recall it was the day they were having the first examination and I saw several men standing in front of Dr. Alderman's office and Mr. Alderman was speaking to these gentlemen and I walked up and stood there for a moment and heard this statement by Mr. Alderman: that this draft was unconstitutional; I think they were about the words that I got. I was a little surprised at the statement and I stood there for a moment and Mr. Alderman looked around and saw me and asked me how long I had been there. He first asked me if I had been there five minutes, and I said "No," and then he said "Have you been here five seconds?" and I said "I think I have," and then he said, "Were you here long enough to hear me make a fool of myself?" and I said, "Yes," and then the previous conversation was brought up and the statement was brought out that he had said a quotation from Hannis Taylor, that a constitutional lawyer had made that statement and it was a repetition and I thought at first it was his own statement; but he was quoting.

Q. To whom was he talking?

A. I don't know.

Q. Were they young men here to be examined?

A. I can't say, I only recall two or three and they were not.

Q. Did you have any other conversation with him?

A. There was some little conversation and Mr. Alderman said he would be glad for me to read what Hannis Taylor had said and he brought me the paper which I looked over. Following that we had one or two conversations on this subject, much of which I cannot recall, and as a final statement I said to Mr. Alderman that what I had said to him was because I felt that he was mistaken in his position and if he could not come to see it as I did he had best not speak of it further.

Q. Was that after war had been declared?

A. I think that was on the first day they were being examined.

Cross examination by Mr. Alderman.

Q. On that occasion there in front of Dr. McMullen's office is it your statement here that I stated that it was unconstitutional, that I myself stated that?

A. No, I said that that was my understanding in the beginning, but I went back and explained that in the beginning I only heard that part of the sentence which led me to believe that you said so, but in further conversation I found out that I only heard the last part of the statement and not the first and I did not know that you were quoting Hannis Taylor.

Q. You would not affirm here that I have myself at any time stated that the draft was unconstitutional or that it was unconstitutional to take soldiers out of the United States—that I have made that statement as my own?

A. No, sir.

Q. You said that we had several conversations after that article of Hannis Taylor's was given you by myself, as we discussed that matter in your office did I not time and again decline, even when you pushed the matter, to say whether it was or was not constitutional or unconstitutional but that there was a definite way to determine the constitutionality of it and that was for the Supreme Court to settle it? Did I not decline to express myself as saying that it was one or the other?

A. I do not think nor have I attempted to impress upon any one that you were sufficiently informed to say whether it was constitutional or not constitutional.

Q. I just wanted to get that straight, I have very high regard for Dr. Griffin; I think he will agree that I have never in his presence made any statement that the taking of soldiers out of the country was unconstitutional.

Mr. Pruden to Mr. Alderman. Have you any further questions to ask?

Mr. Alderman. Just now I have not.

Re-examination by Mr. Pruden.

Q. Doctor, he was showing, however, Mr. Taylor's views about the matter; he brought that article to you and he was telling those people what Mr. Taylor thought, but he said he was not lawyer enough to know about it?

A. No sir, I used that word myself; he spoke of some work that Mr. Taylor had done and gave him as an authority.

Re-examination by Mr. Alderman.

man.

Q. I did not hand you that paper or discuss that paper there in that crowd before the doctor's office.

A. I could not say; the only part that I can say is that I heard this statement which I thought was yours but which afterwards proved to be Mr. Taylor's.

Mr. Phelps was sworn and testified:

Q. Did you ever have any conversation with Mr. Alderman about the war or draft?

A. Yes, sir, about the draft law.

Q. When was that?

A. After the draft.

Q. Where was it?

A. In front of Mrs. Ned Wood's.

Q. Will you state what the conversation was?

A. I met Mr. Alderman and we spoke and he said "Didn't I understand that you said that you wished that you could go to France?" I told him Yes, I had made such a statement. Then he says, "The law is unconstitutional to send our boys to France." And I said, "I don't think so," and he says, "I wouldn't begin to stake my knowledge against Mr. Taylor's for I think he is as smart a man as we have and he says it is unconstitutional." We discussed it a little but I can't recall just what.

Q. Do you remember whether he said anything about the right to carry the drafted men to Europe?

A. Yes, he said that we had no right to do it.

Cross-examination by Mr. Alderman.

Q. Are you saying that I said that it was unconstitutional to carry men outside the state or that I had seen a statement from Mr. Taylor that it was unconstitutional? Did I say it of my own knowledge?

A. You said that Mr. Taylor said so. And I said, "Mr. Alderman, is Mr. Taylor any smarter than some of the men who made this law?" We discussed it for some time.

Q. The point that I am asking is this, did you ever hear me say for myself that it was unconstitutional?

A. No, you said Mr. Taylor.

Q. And that I said I would not put myself against Mr. Taylor?

A. Yes, sir, or anybody else.

Q. Did I say that I would not put myself against Mr. Taylor or against anybody else?

A. Yes, sir, you did.

Q. That I would not for a moment undertake to answer that question as to whether it was unconstitutional or not?

A. Yes, sir; we discussed and I said that I thought it was constitutional to draft against invasion and we had been invaded.

Q. The point I am making is simply this, whether I stated that I would not put myself against Mr. Taylor or against anybody else.

A. Yes, sir, but you said that you would take Mr. Taylor's knowledge on that question against anybody else.

Q. That was a clear case of misunderstanding; he heard me state that I would not put my knowledge against Mr. Taylor or anybody else.

Re-examination by Mr. Pruden.

Q. But he was giving you Mr. Taylor's opinion?

A. Yes, sir, and he sanctioned it.

Mr. Pruden is sworn and testified:

Q. Mr. Pruden, what was the name of the drafted man boarding with you?

A. Julien Ward.

Q. What did Mr. Ward tell you?

Mr. Berryman. Is it proper to hear my testimony?

Mr. Pruden. Mr. Alderman, do you object to hear my testimony?

Mr. J. A. Boyce was sworn and testified:

Q. Were you present at Great Hope church Sunday before last when Mr. Alderman addressed the meeting?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Tell what you know.

A. He was called there to preach an ordination sermon for deacons. To illustrate his point he brought out Germany and her efficiency to show how efficient an officer in the church ought to be. He said that the Kaiser was the smartest man in the world; he said that Germany and her allies had about eleven million men and the others that were fighting against her had about twenty-five million men and that Germany was holding her own, and he referred to it in his speech five or six times and brought in Germany and her efficiency.

Q. What was said by him as to why France went to war?

A. Well, he asked the question and answered it himself as to why Russia was in the war; he was speaking about grafting and he said that she was after the Dardanelles, and he said why was France in the war, and he said she was after Alsace-Lorraine, and he said why was Germany in the war? and he said Germany was after the Dardanelles, too.

Q. Do you remember anything else?

A. No, sir, but I should say that half of his speech was about it.

Q. Did you hear any expression of opinion as to the sermon as to loyalty or disloyalty?

A. They didn't think he ought to talk that way; it didn't sound very loyal to me, and I got up and went out of the church.

Mr. Alderman. I have no questions to ask.

Mr. Jack Sutton was sworn and testified:

Q. Were you at Great Hope Church on the day named?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Will you please state as well as you recall it what Mr. Alderman said about the war the German emperor, etc.

A. He said that France went into the war to gain back Alsace-Lorraine, and that Russia went into the war to gain the Dardanelles, and that Germany was the best organized country in the world.

Q. How did it impress you?

A. That he was talking in favor of the Germans.

Mr. Alderman. I have no questions to ask.

Mr. W. S. Summersell was sworn and testified:

Q. Do you remember when the list

(continued on page 7)

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