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GREAT INTEREST TAKEN IN THE GUNTER ENQUIRY

City Council Chamber Thronged Last Evening with People of Both Sexes--Police-men Sturgeon and Boulter Testify Against the Accused--Wrangling of Counsel Enlivened the Proceedings.

The public investigation which the Police Commission is making in reference to charges preferred by Ald. W. S. Hooper against Special Policeman A. D. Gunter, is certainly proving a great drawing card. The City Council Chamber has been the scene of some stirring incidents in days gone by. Men elected to serve the people have made charges and recriminatory charges against one another and in the heat of passion have made use of some pretty strong language, but the Gunter investigation has all previous performances trimmed to a finish.

Ald. Clark, as Chairman of the Police Commission, acts as presiding officer, supported on the right by Aids. Osborne and Harrison, and on the left by Aids. Vanwart and Mitchell.

Mr. J. D. Phinney, K. C., appears as counsel for the defendant, Special Policeman Gunter, while Mr. R. B. Hanson represents the complainant, Ald. W. S. Hooper. The complainant and the man accused of disloyalty to the city, are permitted to occupy seats within the arena.

It is astonishing the interest that is being manifested in this enquiry on the part of the public. Anything in the nature of a scrap usually takes well in Fredericton, and can draw an audience without a great deal of advertising. There was a hockey match last evening, but it did not prevent the City Council Chamber from being packed almost to suffocation. Upwards of two hundred people were present, including women, men, boys and girls, and the majority of them were on their feet for three solid hours, listening to the evidence and the frequent tiffs between the counsel.

The enquiry was begun at eight o'clock, and it lacked a few minutes to eleven o'clock when Chairman Clark announced an adjournment until this evening.

The witnesses who testified were Police Officers Sturgeon and Boulter, both recent appointments to the force. They swore that Policeman Gunter added a departmental store catalogue to the scanty literature of the police station and that it, or, rather, its contents, had furnished a fruitful topic for discussion at every session.

Mr. Gunter, according to Policeman Sturgeon, was firmly of the opinion that in the interests of economy it was advisable for the man of limited means to patronize catalogue houses. Policeman Sturgeon, it seems, thought of buying a coat for his wife, and talked the matter over with Mr. Gunter. The latter suggested that his wife might call and see Mrs. Gunter's and discuss the matter with her. Eventually she did call, and although there were plenty of coats shown in the catalogue, none suited Mrs. Sturgeon, consequently if she is wearing a coat today, some local merchant made the sale.

Policeman Boulter swore that Mr. Gunter had told him that the local merchants charged two prices for goods and were robbing the public. He also swore that he had not made any very strenuous efforts to enforce the Scott Act since Mr. Gunter joined the force, as he considered that kind of work was to be his, (Gunter's) specialty. He was sharply reminded by the Chairman of the nature of the oath he had taken upon joining the force.

The evidence of Policeman Sturgeon and Boulter showed considerable hostility on their part to Officer Gunter.

Many of the spectators appeared to enjoy more leeway than would be permitted them in a court of justice. They frequently applauded or hissed statements of the witness and counsel, and occasionally somebody would make remarks of an uncomplimentary nature concerning members of the commission. Under the circumstances the duties of the chairman were of a very trying nature to say the least. Frequently questions, intended only for a legal mind were threshed out before him and he was called on for an off hand decision. He certainly acquainted himself well under the circumstances. No doubt all the members of the commission will be glad when the inquiry is at an end.

STURGEON'S EVIDENCE

Policeman Sturgeon was the first witness called. The oath was administered by Chairman Clark. Examined by Mr. Hanson he said that he had been a policeman since Aug 15th his hours being from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. He was acquainted with Policeman Gunter but was not familiar with his duties. Under regulations one officer was always on duty at the police station in the night time. Mr. Gunter was a free lance with no particular hours. Witness remembered being in the police station with Boulter and Gunter when there was a discussion in regard to the price of boots. All took part in the discussion. Mr. Gunter mentioned a departmental store in Toronto as being a suitable place to buy boots.

Mr. Phinney here interrupted and there was quite a tiff in which counsel on both sides and Ald. Hooper joined.

The Chairman said that it was the wish of the Commission that the enquiry proceed as expeditiously as possible.

Resuming the witness said he told Mr. Gunter that he knew nothing of the Toronto Company. Mr. Gunter wanted to know if he would like to see a catalogue and witness said he would. Mr. Gunter said he would bring one down. He did so the next evening. It was lying on the desk when witness went on duty. Mr. Gunter was present at the time. Witness looked at the catalogue but found nothing in it to suit him and told Mr. Gunter so.

There was not much said about the matter as witness had to leave to go on duty. He frequently had conversations with Mr. Gunter about mail order houses. Mr. Gunter said that the goods were satisfactory. He said he bought his clothes in Toronto.

Mr. Phinney here raised an objection.

Ald. Hooper--The Chairman will observe that it is Mr. Phinney who is making the trouble and not I.

Mr. Phinney--The learned alderman will probably have his say later on. The witness continuing said that he was under the impression that Mr. Gunter said he bought all his clothing in Toronto. He also said that freight was paid on a \$25 order. He also said something about order blanks in explanation of them. Witness did not think he advised him to buy his boots there as there was nothing in the catalogue satisfactory. He brought the catalogue to the station so the witness could select boots

from it. Mr. Boulter took part in the discussion. He said he would not buy from Toronto as he wanted to see the goods first. Mr. Gunter said: "He's coming and I think I will get an order out of him yet." About this time witness took his departure. The catalogue remained in the station for some time and was there on Monday of this week.

We talked of the mail order business nearly every night when Mr. Gunter was there. Mr. Gunter said that his wife sent orders to Toronto.

Witness saw a coat in the catalogue which he thought might suit his wife and told Mr. Gunter so. He suggested that witness send his wife around to his (Gunter's) house in regard to the matter. Witness said he did not think that his wife would care to go around, whereupon Mr. Gunter said that he would send Mrs. Gunter around to see witness's wife, and Mrs. Gunter did come around, but the coat did not suit Mrs. Sturgeon and no purchase was made. Witness in looking over the catalogue, had remarked on the cheapness of pungs. He would not say that Mr. Gunter had urged him to buy in Toronto. He did not hear Mr. Gunter say "that you boys are foolish to buy in Fredericton." Mr. Gunter had said that his neighbors ordered from the Toronto store through him and his wife. Did not hear Mr. Gunter say that the merchants of Fredericton were robbers.

In regard to the catalogue, witness was positive that Mr. Gunter asked him if he would like to see it.

When he finished with the witness, Mr. Hanson sat down so heavily that the chair gave way beneath him.

"Too heavy," was the caustic comment of Mr. Phinney.

Under cross examination by Mr. Phinney the witness said that Mr. Gunter asked him if he would like to see the catalogue and he said yes. The catalogue was brought there and the witness examined it. A catalogue or one like it is now in the police station. It might be a catalogue that was produced in the court room a few nights ago.

Mr. Hanson wanted to know if the catalogue was in evidence. The chair man replied in the affirmative, whereupon Mr. Hanson wanted to know what the catalogue was doing kicking around the police station.

Mr. Phinney explained that the catalogue had been shown in court but was not really in evidence.

At this stage Mr. Gunter made a remark sotto voce, which brought Mr. Hanson to his feet with a bound.

"You hold your tongue," quoth he. Mr. Phinney, wishing no doubt to avoid a quarrel and possible bloodshed, stepped between the parties.

"I will take no impudence from Mr. A. D. Gunter," declared Mr. Hanson with some heat.

After some cross firing between the counsel, the incident closed and the enquiry was resumed.

Mr. Phinney wanted to know if witness had heard any complaints against Mr. Gunter as a policeman. The witness replied that he had heard some complaints in connection with an arrest. In regard to the catalogue they had frequently conversed about it. He had talked about ordering a coat for his wife, but did not do so. Witness had not seen a departmental store catalogue until shown one by Mr. Gunter. He had only been residing in the city about a month and no catalogues had been sent to him. The reason his wife did not order a coat from the catalogue was that she felt that she could do just as well in town. His belief was that Mr. Gunter was not in the habit of calling attention to the bargains in the catalogue. There was a scarcity of literature in the police station and the witness read the catalogue quite frequently. Mr. Gunter did not call attention to pungs advertised in the catalogue. He could not say that Mr. Gunter had urged him to buy from the catalogue.

The witness was questioned about a conversation with Policeman Boulter and replied that the latter had said he would not buy from a catalogue house if he got the goods at half price. Witness was inclined to agree with Boulter on this point. He had seen the order forms used by mail order houses, as one had been left at his house by either Mr. Gunter or Mrs. Gunter.

Re-examined by Mr. Hanson, the witness said that he had heard some complaints about Mr. Gunter arresting men who were slightly intoxicated. Witness had bought nothing from Toronto, but it was no fault of Mr. Gunter that he had not.

Mr. Hanson wanted to know if the departmental store catalogue had not been a subject of controversy among the policemen ever since it was brought to the police station.

Mr. Phinney objected to the question on the ground that it was introducing new matter, but the chairman allowed it.

The witness answered it in the affirmative. He added that Mr. Gunter had argued on the one side and Policemen Hartt, Boulter and Sturgeon on the other.

Mr. Hanson--In the words of the Chief of Police, Mr. Gunter had mail order houses on the brain?

The question was objected to by Mr. Phinney on the ground that it referred to a matter of opinion.

Mr. Hanson quoted from the Chief's evidence to show that he had made a statement of that kind.

The chairman thought that the witness' answer to the question would not influence the commission.

The witness was finally asked if

(Continued on page four.)

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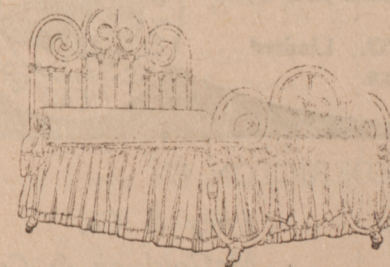
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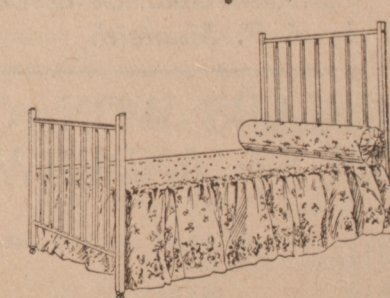
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