

Halifax, N. S., March 7th, 1918.

To

The Members of the City Council.

Gentlemen:-

I beg to present the following report upon the investigation asked for by the council upon the charges of drunkenness on the part of members of the Council and Officials, and of theft of liquor from the Liquor Inspector's office, made by the Halifax Herald and apparently endorsed by the Association for Social Service.

The investigation was open; every member of the Council was examined, and all of the officials who were present in the City Hall at the date mentioned in the charges. The only persons to whom an oath was administered were those connected with the police force, as the right of the Council or Board of Control to examine witnesses on oath is confined to matters affecting that force.

The examination of the witnesses was conducted mainly by the City Solicitor, but Mr. R. H. Murray, K. C., also attended, presumably on behalf of the Social Service Association, and asked such questions as he saw fit. At the conclusion of the civic witnesses an opportunity was given for any other witnesses able to afford any information, but none was tendered or came forward.

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Dealing first with the charge of drunkenness, it should be pointed out that no person was named or even suggested; apparently the whole council and body of officials were included. A charge so vague hardly deserved to be seriously considered. Dealing with it as it was, however, there was no evidence whatever in its support. Not only was the City Hall itself badly wrecked in the explosion, but the building became at once the centre of temporary relief. All of the offices were taken over by various committees and regular civic work partially suspended. The evidence shows that the different members of the Council, including the Board of Control, and civic officials were all engaged immediately upon the explosion in doing such work as they could find to do, and no one came forward with any evidence to the contrary. I have no hesitation in reporting that the charge was absolutely unsupported.

As to the charge of theft of liquor, it apparently related to two different places, and occasions. One, the office of the Inspector, on the second floor of the City Hall, at the time of the explosion; the other, the small stall in the shelter under the parade, used by him as a store-house on an occasion during the summer of 1917.

As to the first, I have already referred to the condition of the building after the explosion, the door of the Inspector's office, like all others in the building, was broken by the explosion and there was nothing to prevent any one of the hundreds

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of people who were crowding the passage in front of the office, from helping himself to anything in the room. Mr. Tracey himself was at work at the poultry exhibition and did not see the condition of his office till the following day.

As to the stall in the patrol shelter, Mr. Tracey does not claim that any liquor was stolen from there, but only that on one occasion the door was opened without his authority. On this he is contradicted emphatically by all the other persons present on the occasion here referred to, Controller Taylor, Deputy-Chief of Police Northover, Policeman Johnston, and Mr. Lawless, driver of the patrol wagon. Unquestionable they were in a far better position to tell than he as they were standing directly alongside of the stall, while he only noticed it from the door of the shelter and was at the time engaged in pushing behind the patrol wagon in which the seized liquor was stored, a position from which he could scarcely be expected to make any accurate observation of what was directly ahead of the wagon. I have no hesitation in accepting the evidence of the Controller and three members of the police force and concluding that Tracey mistook the stall used by him for one of the others exactly similar, alongside of it.

In conclusion therefore I beg to report for the reasons given that the charges were absolutely unsupported by any evidence whatever.

Respectfully submitted,

P. F. Martin,

MAYOR.