

REV. STARK WINS FIGHT FOR LID

St. Cloud Minister's Move in Laying Matter Before
Attorney General May Result in an Impeachment
Trial—Young Says He Will Prosecute.

(Special to The Tribune.)

ST. CLOUD, Minn., Sept. 16.—Just why the lid fever struck St. Cloud will always remain one of the questions to which there will never be made a logical answer. On the other hand, any one acquainted with the city of St. Cloud will understand the reason why, after the fever took root, it should develop into factional fights, court suits and finally result in the threatened impeachment of the mayor. That is entirely logical.

St. Cloud is German, so German, in fact, that the city might as well be located in the kaiser's own domain. Being so typically Teutonic, the town is conservative, well governed and slow to take action in anything. It simply happened so that an evangelist blundered into the city last winter, although there was no need of his coming, and one night he stirred up the foreign element (the Americans and Scandinavians, remember the city is Ger-

month. Occasionally Ald. Stephens would say a few words of magic and the thing would stir. It was not till every member of the city council with one exception had nailed spikes in the heels of the corpse that the lid was officially buried by the council, and then it was that Rev. C. W. Stark took the step which will result in the closing of the saloons of St. Cloud or the expulsion of the reverend gentleman from St. Cloud.

ATTY.-GEN. YOUNG DRAFTED.

With the assistance of G. W. Peterson, county attorney of Todd county, Rev. Stark brought charges against Mayor J. E. C. Robinson for malfeasance in office, before Attorney-General E. T. Young. The astute Rev. Stark had at last struck the right method of going after the lid. The attorney-general could not avoid doing his duty, and besides, St. Cloud was

PRINCIPALS IN THREATENED IMPEACHMENT HEARING



Mayor E. C. Robinson, who may be forced to face serious charges as result of crusade.



Attorney General Young, who says he will enforce the "closing" law if complaints are made.

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man) on the evils of rum. In a moment of feverish excitement a crusade was declared against the saloons and it being impossible to abolish them the next best thing was tried to regulate them according to the laws of Minnesota.

BENSEN CLOSES SALOONS.

The mayor, J. N. Bensen, who is a Hanoverian by birth, but, alas, an Episcopalian by religion, closed the saloons Sundays during the rest of his term, and he would have left the city on account of the strong pressure made to bear on him if it had not been for the sudden and very tragic death of his brother, whose demise caused the lid business to be forgotten during the remainder of Mayor Bensen's term in office.

As a matter of fact, Mayor Bensen had left the city and had gone as far as St. Paul on his way to Mexico when the news of his brother's death called him back.

Mayor Bensen, who is one of the best loved citizens of St. Cloud, is German enough to hate trouble, and if he had been commanded by the United States government to run again for mayor, he would have skipped the country rather than make the race for the office to which he could have been elected without opposition, in spite of his enforcing the law for the first time in the history of St. Cloud.

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On his absolute refusal to run for the office of mayor, the lid faction was helpless, and J. E. C. Robinson, an attorney, had the unpopular honor thrust upon him. The first official act of the new mayor last April was to issue an order to the chief of police, to the effect that the saloons of the city could keep open Sabbaths, except from 10 a. m. till 12 m. during services. This being the popular period for devotion, there seems to be no reason why any saloonkeeper in St. Cloud should hold his place of business open during Sabbath services, as everybody in St. Cloud goes to church on Sundays.

It was believed by some that the lid business was over, but such was not the case, and the reason why it was not is peculiar.

THE LID GHOST ARISES.

About the middle of the summer the lid ghost arose, and this time it was the Rev. C. W. Stark, pastor of the Methodist church, who was the chief conjurer. He claimed to have secured evidence of the Sunday-breaking law against 29 saloonkeepers of St. Cloud, and one of the most prominent ones, Adolph Lindenberg, was finally summoned in court in Sauk Center for violating the law. It will be remembered that County Attorney J. B. Himsel refused to authorize the issuing of the warrant for the arrest of Lindenberg, so Rev. Stark had to have the warrant issued in Sauk Center.

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not of sufficient importance to make it an object for any state official to shun his duty in such a matter.

The complaint was filed and the attorney-general has now given his word that the papers will be served on Mayor Robinson. There can be only one outcome, namely, that Mayor Robinson will be impeached and fined. Just what tribunal the case will come before is not definitely known, but with Attorney-General Young as the complainant in the suit against the mayor it seems that the strong hand of the law has already the chief executive of St. Cloud by the throat.

To the friends of Robinson it seems rather unjust that he should be singled out for impeachment when there are hundreds if not thousands of mayors and village presidents in the state who could be impeached and fined in the same manner as the mayor of St. Cloud. Mayor Robinson boasts of the fact that he has not been in a saloon in St. Cloud for many years. He has always been a man of exemplary habits, and, curiously enough, he detests saloons, but he believes that St. Cloud wants the wide open policy, and he realizes that the city is well behaved weeks days and Sundays, whether or not the saloons keep open.

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He declares that the people of the city have not been bespoiled by Sunday drinking, and never will be. Now that the clouds of impeachment hang over him he awaits his fate philosophically, looks after his business interests and reads his Greek and Latin classics, of which he is more fond than lid squabbles and law suits.

A PERMANENT LID.

In speaking of his coup d'etat, Rev. C. W. Stark smiles serenely and says that the problem is solved. He has given up arresting saloonkeepers and introducing resolutions before the council. He says that he will simply use the attorney-general on the next mayor of St. Cloud who does not live up to the oath of his office, and that means that, willing or unwilling, St. Cloud will have to put on the lid.

It will not make any difference what the St. Cloud people want, as long as Rev. C. W. Stark is in the city, and he has just been engaged by his congregation for another year. He will use the state official on the chief executive of the municipality, and if the latter is not good, it will cost him his job and possibly some money.

It is stated that Mayor J. E. C. Robinson visited the attorney-general the latter part of last week, but the latter gave him no hope. He said that if any other municipality in Minnesota would make similar complaint he, as attorney-general, would commence suit against that official.

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The trial was one of the greatest travesties ever recorded in this state, and resulted in a unanimous acquittal by 12 "honest and true" jurors.

Rev. Stark changed his tactics, and caused to have introduced at a council meeting a set of resolutions commanding the mayor to enforce the state law. Aid. J. F. Stephens championed the passing of the resolutions. They were quietly laid on the table at the meeting when they were introduced, and the ghost of the lid lay there in state for nearly a

to put on the lid.

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It is possible that the suit against Mayor Robinson will become of importance throughout the state. It would be well that the people of Minnesota would realize that laws are made to be observed, and that if the citizens do not want saloons closed on Sundays the best thing to do, in place of openly violating the statutes, is to repeal the law which says that saloons shall be closed from 11 o'clock at night till 5 o'clock in the morning and all days Sundays.

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