

PILGRIMS' IDEALS PRAISED BY TAFT

450 Children Cheer Former
President in Tercentenary
Address in Academy

SAYS THEY TRIED COMMUNE

So far as the audience itself was concerned, last night's town meeting in the Academy of Music, a part of the tercentenary celebration of the Pilgrim Fathers, included some good music, two rattling good speeches and a house filled with representative men and women of Philadelphia.

But to those behind the scenes there were, both before and after the formal meeting, incidents which carried with them an impressive lesson in the power of such celebrations for public good. The actors in these little, unprogrammed incidents were former President Taft, Mayor Moore and 450 boys and girls from the Holmes Junior High School Fifty-fifth and Chestnut streets, who were members of the chorus that furnished much of the music.

There is probably not one of those young students who is not better equipped today to controvert the glittering theories of social revolutionaries and communists. They had listened with rapt attention to Mr. Taft as he told of the failure of the communist experiment made by the highly intelligent men and women who came over here on the Mayflower and two following ships. And it was notable that the applause that greeted his eloquent denunciations from this lesson came more spontaneously from these boys and girls and was continued more enthusiastically by them than the rest of the audience.

Faces Show Appreciation

Their elders had known of those things before, but these young students it all came as something entirely new and, as they listened to the ringing words from the man who had been President of their country, the deep impression that the idea was making upon them was shown clearly by the expression on their faces.

Later, when Mr. Taft came from the stage, the boys and girls had gathered to wait for him behind the scenes and the reception they accorded him made the joyful face of the former President fairly beam with pleasure.

He shook hands right and left, frankly giving the preference to the girls, but not by any means ignoring the boys. And, when one boy, mistakingly, asked for an autograph, the big man took the book and said laughingly, "Well, my boy, I'll tell you, I'll do it for you. If you'll promise not to get me into the business."

Ten minutes later, when he emerged from his dressing room to walk over to the Bellevue-Stratford, he found his young friends gathered in Locust street, waiting to honor him in a more vociferous way than was permissible inside the building.

As soon as he appeared coming through the doorway, their cheer leaders gave the signal and all 450 fairly strained their throats in their second yell, followed by a ringing "Taft-Taft-Taft."

Mr. Taft turned back with a frank laugh of pleasure and raised his hat to them. And they all went home, sure that bolshevism must be wrong, first, because Mr. Taft had said so, and secondly, because the Pilgrim Fathers had tried it and found it bad.

It was a great night for the Philadelphia Mayflower committee, but it was a greater one for the Holmes School.

Before the curtain went up, while the boys and girls were settling into

their seats on the stage, their director, George LeRoy Lindsay, spied Mayor Moore going into the Green Room and asked him to come out and say a few words to them while the Police Band was playing in front of the house.

There was a great stir among them when the Mayor came quietly in and, crowding up close among those on the front row, motioned for silence and cupped his hands so that he could speak without his voice disturbing the audience in its enjoyment of the band.

"Girls and boys," he said, "I don't know of anything better for you than this interest you are showing in music—particularly singing. Music in any form is good. There is no better influence for young or old. But I think you have chosen wisely in taking up this chorus work and in learning to sing."

"If more people would learn to sing and would keep on singing, there would be less unhappiness, less ill-feeling, less wickedness in the world. The man or woman who sings is happy. And the man or woman who is happy does not feel like being wicked. Keep it up. It will do you good and do good to the city you live in."

What Audience Did Know

All of this, of course, was not on the program and the audience knew nothing about it. But the audience did see and did know that, for some reason, the students in the chorus formed one of the most interesting features of the celebration after the curtain went up.

Mayor Moore opened the meeting with a few brief words in which he appointed Prof. Rufus M. Jones as "moderator." After Scripture reading and a prayer by the Rev. William Van Derveer Berg, secretary of the committee, the Rev. Canon E. A. Burroughs, of Trinity College, Oxford, England, chaplain to the king, was introduced.

Canon Burroughs made an earnest plea for American participation in the League of Nations. He referred in words of praise to the work Mr. Taft had done to found a league to enforce peace, and he urged his hearers to draw from the experiment of the Pilgrims the lesson that this country should now join in striving for a high universal ideal as the forefathers strove for a high ideal in their own day.

"This may be hard business," he said, "but it is good humanity. America has proved herself the great welder of all

nationalities. Are you going to refuse us now the expert help which America alone can give?"

Before introducing Mr. Taft Prof. Jones added his plea for a sympathetic attitude toward a family of nations to preserve peace. He aroused laughter by comparing us to the subject of a poet who "was not among the great ones of our language" and then he quoted:

The lightning-bug is brilliant,
But hasn't any mind;
His blunders through existence
With his headlight on behind.

Former President Taft received an ovation and when he rose to speak the whole audience rose with him. He gave a comprehensive history of the Pilgrim Fathers, interspersing it here and there with sallies of keen wit which were always accompanied by that humorous Taft chuckle which has become one of his most distinguishing characteristics as a speaker.

After summarizing the historical facts, Mr. Taft continued:

"Not one of the towns has ever become a city of great importance. They left no written constitution that was embodied in the fundamental law of the succeeding state. They left no company body of people who continued their identity into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They made no great declaration of principle which they sought to spread through the world."

"They were a modest, God-fearing, earnest, quiet company, who wished to live unmolested in the enjoyment of their religion and principles. They were not the missionaries. They did not seek to expand their territorial limits."

"Why is it, then, that the 21st of December is celebrated always as 'Forefathers' Day,' as if they were the ancestors of our whole people? Why is it that we so eagerly search for every possible circumstance connected with the life of this colony, from 1621 to 1692, when it ceased to be?"

Tells the Reason

"It is because the lives they led, the principles which guided them, the ideals that they followed, are cherished today by us as the cornerstone of our republic and our civilization. Although the Pilgrims and their colony died within a century, the power for good of their teaching and of their example can be traced through three centuries."

"They gave a conscience to our country. The anti-ethical influence of what they did and were is still one of the strongest and best forces in our national life. This is why we commemorate them."

"In England the event is cherished because the people of that country value much an English-speaking union of the nations of the world in maintaining the stability and peace of the world, and they rejoice from their hearts at these historical evidences that the sources of the strength, physical, moral and spiritual, of this great republic were in the mother country and constitute an indispensable bond between us."

"In the first two years their crops were poor, and they lived on very short rations. They found difficulty in securing the necessary efficiency of labor under the commune system in spite of the serious threat of starvation. Governor Bradford departed from the principle of the commune to the extent of assigning to each family group a parcel for its private use and enjoyment."

Those on the "welcome committee" were: William McLean, E. Tusey Passmore, John Hampton Barnes, Joseph N. Snellenburg, Frank P. Croft, William P. Geist, Ellis A. Gimbel, Gen. W. W. Atterbury, Dr. W. W. Keen, A. W. Sewall, Thomas E. Cornish, Harry T. Jordan, Horace E. Smith, Charles E. Brinley, George Irving Mer-

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"This effected a marked change. It made all hands very industrious. Much more was planted, cultivated and garnered. He says, 'The women went willingly into the field and took their little ones with them to set corn, which befitted some of their weakness and inability, and to have compelled them to do this would have been through great tyranny and oppression.'

"The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundry years, and that amongst Godly and sober men, may well evince the vanity of the concept of Plato and other ancient authors, applauded by some of later times, that the taking away of property, and bringing a community into a common wealth would make them happy and flourishing, as if they were wiser than God. For this community, so far as it was, was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort."

"In these days when our country is endangered by the false views of those who would destroy our government and attempt an economic system and a political system that denies religion, and

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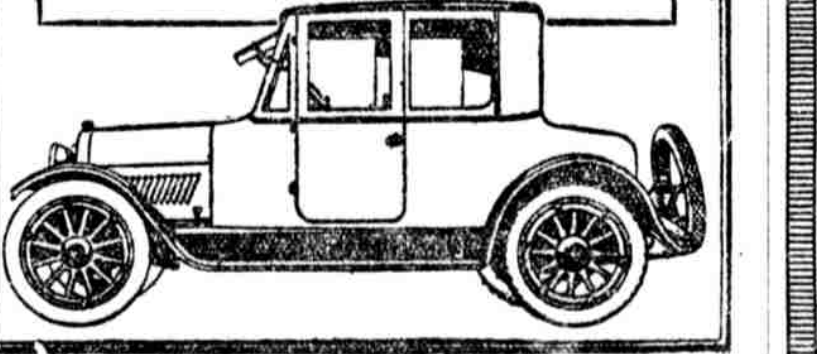
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