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'MINUTE MEN' RUN TO COVER; 3 PROBES OPEN

Vice President Resigns, Charging He Was Duped Into Racket.

UNION TAKES HAND

Asks Federal Inquiry; Mayor to Conduct Lead- er's Hearing.

By JOSEPH P. McLAUGHLIN
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The "Minute Men and Women of Today," which armed its adherents with tear gas guns for use against C. I. O. members, began to disintegrate yesterday under the spotlight of The Record's revelations.

The "vice president general" resigned in disgust, calling the outfit a "racket" and declaring he had been "duped" by Benjamin Waite Blanchard, head of the outfit.

Three Inquiries Planned.

Plans for three probes got under way.

1. Mayor Wilson announced that he would take over the case and would sit as Magistrate when Blanchard comes up for hearing on several charges today.

2. The La Follette Senate Civil Liberties Investigating Committee instructed its local agent, Fred G. Krivones, to make a complete investigation; particularly into the disclosure that the money for the tear-gas guns came from prominent Philadelphians and Eastern industrialists.

3. M. Herbert Syme, counsel for the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, against whose members the tear gas guns were aimed, sent evidence against the "Minute Men" to the Department of Justice yesterday, and prepared to fly to Washington with further evidence today.

Mayor Wilson was indignant after learning about the "Minute Men" and its organizer, who has a sizeable police record.

Mayor to Hold Hearing.

"After reading police reports and stories published in the Philadelphia Record," the Mayor declared, "I have decided to hold a hearing on the 'Minute Men' case in my office at 2 P. M. tomorrow."

"This is such a serious matter that the defendants should be held in very substantial bail as a warning to others who may be inclined to use force in labor disputes."

Blanchard, his wife, Bobbie, and four of his members are under bail on charges of inciting to riot, disorderly conduct and carrying concealed deadly weapons. They were held on those charges by Magistrates Costello and Beifel.

Faces Coast Charge.

In addition, Blanchard is under bail on a fugitive warrant from Contra Costa, Calif., charging him with grand larceny.

If there is any technical legal bar to his taking over the hearing of the case, the Mayor said, he will issue new warrants.

Walter Godley, of Wallingford, Delaware county, listed on stationery of the "Minute Men" as "vice president general," was very bitter in his denunciation of the outfit yesterday.

"I have resigned because I became convinced it was nothing more than a racket," declared Godley, who also is secretary of the National Society of Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

"I joined the 'Minute Men' when Mrs. Blanchard came to me during the last Presidential campaign and represented the organization as interested in upholding the Constitution.

Others Duped.

"Several other people, I understand, have been duped and cheated

MINUTE MEN ROUTED BY THREE INQUIRIES

Vigilante Group Runs to Cover as Movement Is Branded Racket.

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out of a lot of money for this racket. It is unfortunate that I lent my name to such an organization."

Pierre S. duPont told The Record that he contributed to Blanchard's outfit, but that he did not know the money was to be used for purchase of tear gas guns.

"I was told it was to uphold the Constitution," he said.

Syme's request to Washington was for an investigation not only of the "Minute Men," but "of all other vigilantism" in this city. He declared he has evidence that the "Minute Men" were "a racket, financed by employers to fight honest unionism."

Felony Is Charged.

Syme said Federal statutes make it a felony "to conspire to abridge the civil rights of a citizen."

William M. Leader, head of Branch No. 1, American Federation of Hosiery Workers, accused the "Minute Men" of trying to provoke riots which then could be blamed on union men.

"Our people have been threatened by thugs on many occasions," he declared. "Their purpose obviously is frustration of civil liberties through armed intimidation. They also are responsible for all violence on local picket lines.

"We'll not be provoked into open warfare, as these people desire. Instead, we will co-operate with local and Federal enforcement agents in their efforts to rid the city of them."

Gas Guns Found.

Blanchard first was arrested the night of October 1, when he came to a police station to obtain release of a member arrested for nearly blinding a union speaker with tear gas.

Police found him in possession of six tear gas guns, disguised as oversized fountain pens. In his car outside they found his wife, a Springfield .410 rifle with tear gas shells, a 9 1/2-inch tear gas gun and an assortment of smaller tear gas weapons, shells, badges and membership cards. His wife, too, was arrested.

Then police found a letter bearing the name of duPont, and addressed to A. Atwater Kent, multi-millionaire manufacturer, here. In it duPont said he had contributed to Blanchard's outfit and suggested that Kent do likewise.

Blanchard boasted that numerous other prominent men had contributed to his organization. He contended that he charged his members no dues and sold them badges and tear-gas guns at only \$1 each. However, his advertising circulars set the price of the tear-gas gun at \$4 and the price of a tiny bronze badge at \$3.

Outfit Unregistered.

His outfit is not registered in Harrisburg, under the fictitious names act, but his counsel, John Patrick Walsh, contends that is not necessary, because "it is a non-profit organization."

Russell Duane, of the prominent law firm of Duane, Hecksher & Morris, drew up articles of association for Blanchard's outfit. He was listed on the stationery of the "Minute Men" as "honorary president," but, according to his son, Morris Duane, he had not authorized such use of his name.

Blanchard was arrested in Decatur, Ill., in May, 1925, as a confidence man. He was held in \$15,000 bail in Chicago March 2, 1927, in connection with an alleged swindle.

October 2, 1927, he was arrested in Wheeling, W. Va., on a Federal warrant charging he aided a bank teller embezzle \$3200.

In November, 1929, the United States Department of Justice sent out fliers for him, but Blanchard says that "has been all straightened out." In 1930 he was accused of violating a Federal statute by not paying employees.

Claims 60,000 Members.

Blanchard says he has 60,000 members, but police doubt he has 600. They have been unable to find any members except a few Apex Hosiery Company workers who were anti-C. I. O.

These said they were approached by Blanchard and Mrs. Blanchard as they quit work each day, and told they would be given a badge and a tear gun at a special price of \$1 so they could fight C. I. O.

There was no definite meeting place, they told police, casual meetings being held at homes of Apex workers who were against C. I. O. They said there were about 40 such members.