

# ALL TO HAVE JUSTICE.

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR MUST NOT FAVOR THE NON-EXHIBITERS.

**National Commissioner St. Clair States His Position in Plain Terms—Letters Read Showing That the Lyon & Healy Harp Cannot Be Used in the Thomas Orchestra—The National Body Decides That the Board of Control Should Not Have Touched the Piano Matter.**

"Mr. Thomas is only a subordinate of the Exposition management, and his services will be dispensed with if he interferes with the work of the Exposition in according exact and equal justice to all exhibitors of musical instruments."

This statement was made in earnest and impetuous language by National Commissioner J. W. St. Clair before the meeting of the commission yesterday. Mr. St. Clair was speaking on the subject of the recent action of the Council of Administration in permitting the use in Music Hall of Paderewski's favorite piano. There have been intimations that Mr. Thomas, the musical director of the Exposition, had shown favoritism in the selection of star musicians for the programs of the Exposition concerts. It had been brought out that a majority of all the artists thus far chosen and announced were performers on Paderewski's favorite instrument. This majority applied to about four out of the five selected.

Col. St. Clair's statement was received with expressions of pleasure on the faces of the Commissioners, who have been declaring that the Musical Bureau was not acting fairly by exhibitors of pianos. Mr. St. Clair's words carried much weight, because he is one of the four members of the Council of Administration which has final jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to the administration of the Fair. His colleague in the council, Mr. Massey, is also known to be an advocate of fair play, while the other two members from the Chicago Directory, President Higginbotham and Director Schwab, have never evinced a disposition to discriminate unfairly against any interest as members of the council. Since it was the council which permitted the use of the objectionable instrument against the protest of the National Commissioner its authority in the future can scarcely be questioned.

Commissioner St. Clair had much more to say on the piano controversy but it related chiefly to the jurisdiction of the council.

### A Question of Harps.

After all the arguments had been made and the Commission was about to adjourn, Commissioner P. H. Lannon of Utah caused a buzz of excitement by the introduction of several letters which passed between the piano firm of Lyon & Healy of Chicago and two of the harp-players in Mr. Thomas' World's Fair orchestra. Mr. Lannon, before reading the letters, said that he felt called upon to present them in the interest of fair play. He said he had heard many rumors of subsidies and almost bribery as existing between piano makers and artists, and that some of these stories came close to home in the management of the musical end of the World's Fair.

The Commissioners all pricked up their ears in anticipation of what was to be brought to their attention. After speaking five minutes Mr. Lannon read the correspondence. The first letter was from Edmund Schuecker, who is now the chief harpist in the Thomas orchestra. Mr. Schuecker's letter was sent to the piano firm last October, and extracts from it as follows explain themselves:

CHICAGO, Oct. 14, 1892.—Lyon & Healy—Dear Sir: I take the liberty of inquiring if you are desirous of my taking any interest in the Lyon & Healy harp. If so I must insist that you give me a written agreement guaranteeing me a fee of \$1,000 a year and 10 per cent on every harp sold through my influence, whether party is a buyer or scholar. Furthermore I must have two new Lyon & Healy harps at my disposition, one for orchestra and one for solo use.

If you are not inclined to accept my proposition naturally I will lose interest for the Lyon & Healy harp inasmuch as I have a prospect of representing a celebrated European firm during and after the World's Fair. EDMUND SCHUECKER.

"That doesn't look right," said one Commissioner after the reading of the letters.

"Whose name is signed to that?" inquired Commissioner Massey. "That is worth knowing and I am anxious for any information." Mr. Lannon then announced the name of the writer. There were many significant looks by the Commissioners, who appeared to think they were uncovering something of unusual character. Mr. Lannon next read the following reply by Lyon & Healy to the foregoing letter and dated Oct. 15, 1892:

CHICAGO, Oct. 15, 1892.—Edmund Schuecker, Esq.—Dear Sir: Your worthy proposition we have received and we must decline the same. We desire that you shall return our harp and shall send for same next Tuesday. Please have the harp ready for our carman. Should the harp be not in your residence then please have the goodness to let us know where we can obtain it. LYON & HEALY.

### Mr Thomas Bars One Instrument.

If the first two letters were interesting the third one was regarded of special moment, since it announced that Mr. Thomas had forbidden the use of Lyon & Healy harps by members of his orchestra. The letter was as follows:

CHICAGO, May 1, 1893.—Lyon & Healy—Dear Sirs: I'm very sorry to let you know that this morning Mr. Theodore Thomas gave us notice that he would not allow us to play the Lyon & Healy harps in his orchestra. With the harp I myself was delighted, which you so kindly sent for my disposition, but as you know yourself we must do what Mr. Thomas wants. Thanking you very much for your great kindness you can believe me that we cannot do otherwise, I myself will see that the two harps, 518 and 553, will be packed carefully, then you will please send for them. If possible I'll come to your store in a few days to thank you personally. Very respectfully,  
MISS A. BREITSCHECK.

When this had been read a motion was adopted calling upon President Palmer to appoint a committee of four to investigate the matter. This will be done. In an interview printed herewith representatives of the firm of Lyon & Healy give their reasons for believing that Mr. Thomas is boycotting them in the interests of his and Paderewski's favorite piano firm.

The firm of Lyon & Healy do not propose to submit to what they term the arbitrary dictation and unjust and vindictive discrimination against their instruments. The action in compelling performers to discard their instruments they regard as practically a boycott, and they propose to employ legal counsel and to seek redress in the courts if necessary. At a consultation of the firm's members yesterday this course was finally decided upon, and today or tomorrow will see the engagement by them of legal talent to take action in their behalf. The action of Director Thomas in barring out the firm's harps is, it is said, but the sequel of a long contest between the Chicago firm and a New York rival. The story is told by members of the firm with whom a representative of THE TRIBUNE last night had interviews.

President P. J. Healy had spent most of the day at the Fair grounds in conference with the National Commission. Though evidently alive to the slight put upon him he talked dispassionately and calmly: "There are two causes for Mr. Thomas' attack upon us. First, our harps are competitors, and the only ones of those for which a New York firm are agents. Second, while we have not been piano exhibitors. We have not scrupled to stand by the firms that have been loyal to the World's Fair as against Eastern men who withdrew. Three of the piano manufacturers that withdrew we represented, and we used our utmost influence to induce them to remain. One we induced to remain but the others would not, though a member of our firm spent a week in the East on purpose to remonstrate with them.

"All this has made our firm conspicuous in the opposition to the New York men, and I believe that the present discrimination is a species of revenge instigated by the firm.

"Theodore Thomas is with the New York firm from Alpha to Omega, and if he were anything else he would be grateful. The New-Yorkers have stood by him through thick and thin. They have backed him in all his enterprises and he is bound to them by every tie possible between man and man."

### Will Take Legal Action.

"What action do you think of taking in the matter?"

"I am considering what course to pursue and shall probably take some legal action."

"Then you think that you have had a civil injury of some kind?"

"I do, indeed. It is a boycott of my firm, that's what it is."

Charles M. Lyon, Vice-President and manager of Lyon & Healy, who has more intimate knowledge of the facts of the case than any one, when seen at his residence, No. 305 Ashland avenue, last night,

said: "This attack upon our firm had its beginning some time ago. The present development is but the sequel. Briefly, the facts are as follows: Herr Schuecker, Mr. Thomas' principal harpist, when he came here from Germany last October to fulfill his engagement with the World's Fair concerts, made a trial of our harps. He liked them and wanted us to supply him with one, which we did. Shortly after this he visited our store again and said that Thomas had told him that he didn't want him to play our harps in the orchestra. Herr Schuecker at the time told me that he had taken the position that he should use whatever instrument he pleased. Several months passed and we heard no more of the affair and supposed the matter settled, as Herr Schuecker had said. In the meantime Erard, the London harp firm, had made the New York firm their American agents. One day we were surprised to receive a letter from Herr Schuecker saying that if we desired him to use our harp we must pay him \$1,000 a year, give him 10 per cent commission upon all the harps that he was instrumental in selling, and must supply him with two harps for his personal use, one for the orchestra and one for his house, and adding that if we did not see fit to accept his proposition he wanted an immediate reply, as he had the prospect of an arrangement with a well-known European manufacturer.

"We sent a letter declining his offer and later sent for our instrument. About two months ago Miss Breitshuck, another harpist of Mr. Thomas' orchestra and one of the three just notified to discontinue the use of our harps, sent to engage one of our harps. She arrived a week ago and the harp was sent to her. Yesterday we received her letter saying she could not use our instrument.

### Also on the Organ Question.

"But there is still another phase of this attack upon us. Our harps are not the only things barred from the World's Fair concerts. Last fall an organ was required for one of the World's Fair buildings. Prof. Peabody of the World's Fair Bureau of Music and Mrs. Potter Palmer called upon us, tested our organ, and practically made a selection. Before leaving they said that the instrument needed only the approval of Mr. Thomas. Mr. Healy told them that there then was no likelihood that it would be accepted, which subsequently proved true. The organ that was ultimately accepted by the World's Fair was a 'vocalion,' an organ for which the New York firm is special agent. So you see the New Yorkers are now supreme."

"It was through the New York firm's instrumentality that he secured the position of Musical Director. They defeated the attempt of the Chicago firms to have another man appointed. They have used their influence and pulled wires until their influence seems paramount, and they are now gradually excluding from the grounds all instruments except their own."