ALIEN ENEMIES

The latest infamy of the Germans has caused a feeling of intense bitterness throughout the world and the crystalization into something resembling genuine hatred of public opinion throughout the British Empire. The systematic destruction of German property in Johannesburg, rioting in Vancouver and throughout many of the large industrial cities of Great Britain, is a reflex from the more volatile and less responsible elements of the population of the general resentment that the act of the Germans in sinking the "Lusitania" has occasioned. Up to the present time the peoples of the British Empire, and particularly those in the United Kingdom itself, have acted with supreme sanity and with an apparent realization of the seriousness of the situation, and it is a little disturbing to hear of these popular outbreaks.

As one of the magistrates sitting on the riot cases in London remarked, a proper way to show resentment against the Germans is to enlist and fight in Kitchener's army, and for any man of military age to be concerned in acts of this nature is a confession of cowardice and general undesirability on his part.

It must not be forgotten that by far the greater proportion of the law-abiding and orderly citizens of the United Kingdom are now engaged in military duty, and there must necessarily be a greater proportion of the less useful members of the community in the resi- due. As the Mayor of Middlesboro remarked the other day, the voluntary system of recruiting has to a large extent proved to be a process of the natural selection of the best elements of the male population, and in too many cases the men who are at the "benches" at home should be in the trenches and men who are in the trenches should be at the "benches."

Considering the wide extension and the insidious nature of the German spy system, the anxiety for the internment of alien enemies in Great Britain is quite understandable, but it is no less certain that in the carrying out of the wholesale internment order which has just been issued by the British Government, many innocent persons will suffer with the guilty.

The position of Great Britain, however, in relation to persons of alien enemy nationality is very different to the position of the British dominions. Great Britain is the nerve centre of the Empire, the most important strategic point in our world-wide Empire.

The German residents in Great Britain are to a large extent persons who displace British citizens in the different branches of industrial activity; their presence could be dispensed with in most instances without any loss to the United Kingdom. In Canada, however, as in the other British dominions, we have hitherto welcomed to our shores all desirable elements for the colonization of a great and sparsely populated country, and we expect eventually, as has been the case hitherto, to turn all our immigrants into British citizens owning allegiance to the British flag and British institutions and to none other. There should be no doubt of our ability to do this, for the power of the British Empire to assimilate other nationalities and make of them loyal citizens of the Empire is the greatest testimonial extant to the durability and the righteousness of our institutions. In a country so vast as Canada, it is inconceivable that any great material damage can result from the machinations of alien enemies, even supposing such enemies to be men of intelligence, ably led and provided with large supplies of money. As a matter of fact, however, the large bulk of persons of alien enemy nationality in Canada belong to the laboring class, and the chief thought in their minds at the present time is gratitude and thankfulness for being safe in Canada and away from the bloody business of war. Many of the countries of Europe that have yielded the greatest flow of emigration to Canada are now becoming a debatable ground, as for example, Poland, Galicia and Bukowina. It is more than probable that the territory which lies between the present frontier of Russia and the Carpathian Mountains will eventually become a possession of Russia. The fate of Poland is less certain, but there seems little reason to suppose that the Poles as a nation should be consumed with any great love for either Germany, Austria or Russia. Generally speaking, with the possible exception of a minority of educated Germans and Austrians, whose antecedents and general character it should not be hard for the police to determine, the great bulk of the alien enemy population in Canada belongs to the laboring class, and they are at the present time doing useful work as producers in Canadian industries. If it was worth while in times of peace to spend large sums of money in advertsing the Dominion of Canada as a desirable home for these people, as a place which offered them a chance of independence and uplift, surely we as Canadians should have sufficient confidence in our own institutions to allow these people, so long as they behave themselves, to earn their living and add to the general prosperity of the country.

There has been a good deal of criticism of some of the large industrial concerns in Canada because of their continued employment of workmen of alien enemy nationality, and this has been particularly evident in connection with the operations of the Dominion Iron & Steel Company and the Dominion Coal Company in Cape Breton. The opposition has not arisen from the workmen of these companies, but has proceeded more from outside persons, who desire nothing better than a popular handle for an attack upon any big corporation. At the present time, workmen of enemy nationality are employed both at Sydney and in the mines at Glace Bay. They are comparatively few in numbers and the positions they hold are usually very subordinate. Nevertheless, the loss of these men would hamper to a very large extent the work of the skilled Canadian miners who depend to a large extent upon unskilled labor for the performance of the less important and usually more laborious operations connected with mining and steel making. To intern these men at the present time would not only entail a bill of expense upon the country, but would turn men who are now peaceful and law-abiding citizens into sullen and dissatisfied enemies, who would take the first opportunity that presented itself of obtaining revenge.

Their wives and families would also have to be maintained at the expense of the community, and there would be added all the evils of concentration camps, moral and physical, among which the possibilities of political mal-administration and reprisals are not the least. At the present time these alien enemy workmen are assisting in the production of coal and steel, upon which to a very large extent depends the ability of Canada to manufacture munitions of war and to transport these munitions and men to the battle line.