

nite answer to the resolution of the hon. member, than to read it:

"The undersigned has the honour to submit a copy of a report of the 19th ultimo from the Director of Internment Operations giving particulars with regard to interned prisoners of war, from which it would appear
4 p.m. that there are at the various camps throughout Canada in all 2,222, of whom 1,700 are Germans, the remaining 522 being of Austrian and other enemy nationalities, practically all of the labouring class. It appearing moreover that the 1,700 Germans, 800 were transferred from the West Indies, and are held at the request of His Majesty's Government."

I would draw the attention of the House in a special manner to that report, because we kept constantly in touch with the British authorities in order to ascertain to what extent we could secure the deportation of these undesirable alien enemies to their native land.

By Colonial Office despatch of 14th ultimo it is stated that repatriation by way of Great Britain is now possible to a number not exceeding one hundred adult male enemy aliens from the Dominion, and that in the case of each person full particulars should be telegraphed to ensure proper arrangements as soon as possible.

The undersigned considers it desirable that all enemy interned prisoners who may be regarded as dangerous, hostile or undesirable should be repatriated with the least possible delay, and he therefore recommends that it be provided under the authority of the War Measures Act, 1914, that the Minister of Justice shall be authorized to direct the immediate expulsion, removal or deportation from Canada for the purposes of their repatriation of all such interned aliens of enemy nationality as he may consider dangerous, hostile or undesirable persons to reside in Canada, and that a direction by the Minister of Justice under his hand shall be sufficient authority for the purpose aforesaid.

Moreover the undersigned recommends that inquiry be made of His Majesty's Government for the purpose of obtaining directions as to what disposition is to be made of the 800 who were transferred from the West Indies.

As to the property of interned prisoners in Canada, the undersigned recommends that this shall remain subject to the regulations and powers conferred as heretofore, the restitution or ultimate disposition thereof depending upon the conclusion and stipulations of peace, but that in cases where there is money of the prisoners in the hands of the Director of Internment Operations he be authorized to pay thereout to each of such prisoners upon deportation a sum not exceeding \$75 as a provision for travelling expenses.

That is to say, their expenses to be covered from their own money.

That was a statement of policy in direct response to the resolution as passed at that date following the report from Sir William Otter, Director of Internment Operations. I may say in this connection that the question of admission of alien enemies to enemy

[Mr. Meighen.]

countries, as well indeed to a lesser degree the question of transportation from Canada to Europe, and from European ports to the enemy countries is a subject necessarily under the deliberations of and subject to the disposition of the Peace Conference. The conference, by a press despatch (which I think is correct) of the 22nd of February last, gave answer to the request of the German Embassy that they would not consider at that time its request to permit the return of any of the enemy prisoners of war, the intention being that until peace is finally settled, and possibly longer, the Entente Powers will not take the risk of in any way whatever adding to the manpower of the Central Powers. Consequently, the question of the admission into the enemy countries of interned aliens is necessarily subject wholly for the time being to the decision of the Peace Conference itself, and that being the case the Government of this country can only act when the decision of the Peace Conference is communicated to it. That answer applies wholly and most directly to the resolution that is now before the House. But subject to that overpowering and commanding factor in the situation, our policy is to deport with the least possible delay all alien enemies who have shown themselves undesirable, dangerous or hostile.

The question of transportation comes in as well with relation to alien enemies; and that is the subject of the resolution. The resolution, mark you, bears not at all on aliens, however undesirable, from countries other than enemy countries. But the question of transportation with regard to alien enemies is necessarily a secondary question to the question of repatriation itself, which latter question is under the jurisdiction for the time being of the Entente Powers as collectively represented at the Peace Conference. But in so far as transportation goes, our communications from the British authorities are to this effect: that such is the condition of railway transport in Central and Eastern Europe that even were alien enemies now to be admitted to repatriation to the Central Powers, their transportation could not be secured under present conditions. The Dutch Government has taken the ground that any who land at their ports must be such that they can be transported thence within three days or their landing will not be permitted.

That being the case, the British Government take the ground that they cannot admit into England at this time any substantial number of aliens for repatriation into