

CIVIL SERVANTS ARE DISMISSED

Officials of Long Service in Immigration Hall Are Replaced

By New Men

German Baron Put in to do Important Work—Mr. Rogers Blamed for Change

Recent changes in the staff of the immigration hall at Winnipeg have culminated in the appointment of a naturalized German baron to an important and confidential position in the Dominion immigration offices at Winnipeg, replacing a British-born official of long standing.

Hon. Robert Rogers, taking advantage of his position as acting minister of the interior in the absence of Hon. Dr. Roche, has caused to be dismissed from the service six of the oldest employees of the immigration hall, all of them married men with families. They were let out with one day's official notice, and are face to face with the almost hopeless task of obtaining employment, with a Manitoba winter ahead.

The naturalized German, Baron Von Amorengen, has been put in to assume the position of one of these men, a position requiring technical knowledge, and which can only be adequately filled by a man of long and varied experience in western Canadian affairs.

Veterans in Service.

The faithful service of the men who received the government axe ranges from three and a half to 17 years. One of them, J. M. Boyd, is a veteran British soldier who fought through the Egyptian campaign with Wolseley in 1882, and was at Tel-el-Kebir with the Duke of Connaught. Every one of these men just prior to being dismissed had pledged himself to give one day's pay each month for half a year as a contribution to the patriotic fund.

When the heads of these civil servants were suddenly lopped off some weeks ago the excuse given for the act was the falling off of immigration, but since then a small army of men have been given work in the immigration hall; while a score of men and women have been put to work in secluded rooms on the third floor of the building to handle the measures of relief that have been undertaken for needy settlers. A Free Press reporter personally visited these rooms Wednesday afternoon and saw the big new staff at work.

Those Let Out

The men who have been let out include the following:

Chas. C. Gerik (a Russian), 17 years' service.

Robert Adamson, 14 years' service.

M. Mitchell, seven years' service.

John Beckett, six years' service.

J. M. Boyd, three and a half years' service.

— Johnson, a Scandinavian, in the employ of the grain department, length of service unknown.

A month prior to the date of the dismissal J. Bruce Walker, commissioner of immigration, was summoned to Ottawa, and on his return to Winnipeg the commissioner intimated to the men that there had been some talk of dismissals. As the days passed and nothing more was heard of it they began to have hope that the matter had blown over, especially as they had received instructions under date of Sept

to get measured for the winter's uniform. Then came a wire from Ottawa on Sept. 16 with notice to get out on the following day.

In the case of Mitchell, who has a wife and four or five children, the blow was particularly severe. He was employed in the accountant's branch, where three young single men were retained, who had entered the service long after he had. One of these young men is a son of H. G. Johnston, superintendent of agencies at the immigration hall.

Boosted Germany's Cause.

Among others who were retained on the staff when these six men were let out is another naturalized German, named A. Kohnen. It is stated of this man that shortly after war was declared he entered into an altercation with Rev. John Blatherwick, chaplain at the immigration hall, in which he defended the action of Germany and spoke disrespectfully of the late King Edward. At the same time he openly attacked Chas. C. Genik, the Russian who was dismissed, and make the remark that he hoped all the Russians would be killed. Kohnen is said to be a German veteran of the war of 1870, and is reputed to have fought at Metz and Sedan.

It is reported that another German army officer named Abich, formerly a sergeant in the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, was employed at the immigration hall until two or three months before the outbreak of the war, when he suddenly departed for the old country. It is thought that this man may have been connected with the elaborate system of espionage adopted by the German empire. He was given work of a very important nature to do, and travelled extensively about the country.

Size up Situation.

In discussing the situation at the immigration hall a man who is closely in touch with recent events spoke with considerable heat about the action of the government in asking people to stand firm in the present crisis and preaching loyalty, when at the same time they had no hesitancy in throwing into the street men of family who have given good service in their respective positions.

"The Hon. Robert Rogers," he said, "is a many-sided man. To the public he is the ardent patriot. At Valcartier under the folds of the royal standard he shares with the royal duke the salutations of the troops that are marching past. So much for the limelight. The other side is the crafty man, with the

most intimate knowledge of all the underworld of politics, skilful in handling men, and most unscrupulous in the means taken to attain an end. He is without doubt the most dangerous man in Canadian public life to-day.

"The honorable gentleman is at present busy eliminating from the public service all who are not wearing the party machine collar. He imagines that the public is so deeply taken up with the tremendous events that are now stirring the hearts and minds of men that these minor affairs will be passed over. The empire's difficulty is his opportunity.

Chance Followed Election.

"The change of government," he continued, "brought about a very marked change at the immigration hall. Prior to that time it was insisted that the immigration staff attend only to immigration business. This thing of civil servants meddling in election contests would not be tolerated. During that time the commissioner of immigration had full charge and control of the office. Now things have changed, and this is only partially true—the new appointees differ from the members of the old staff in that they seem to have their coming and going regulated from elsewhere.

"An election contest is the signal for calling a contingent from the immigration hall to the firing line. Nearly all the men are sent out, clothed with the powers of provincial police, which adds immensely to their powers as election heelers.

"From the opening days of registration last summer, until the close of the provincial elections, the business of the immigration department would have come to a standstill, had it not been for the few faithful members of the old staff who remained at their posts.

"These are the men who are now thrown out, in order that the election machine workers may be kept in hand until they are needed again."

The general feeling amongst the men dismissed is that, had the Hon. Dr. Roche been at his post things would have been different, but Acting Minister of Immigration Rogers could not resist the temptation to take advantage of such a chance as Dr. Roche's absence afforded.