

INTERNED PRISONERS.

Perhaps we in Canada err just a little in the treatment accorded to interned aliens. It seems just possible that in our desire to give these imprisoned enemies a "square deal" that we lean too much to the side of clemency. At any rate nobody acquainted with conditions in the Vernon Internment Camp will accuse the local authorities of undue severity. That kindness and consideration are by no means appreciated by the Germans held in quarantine here was made amply plain last week when it was found necessary to remove half a dozen of these men who had been guilty of rank insubordination, from the camp to the city jail. Their removal was the signal for a volley of abuse from their compatriots in the camp, who hurled all manner of foul insults at the officers and police, while they loudly cheered the departing prisoners.

We make no comment upon this incident, as the Censor does not encourage criticism of this nature, and we agree in the wisdom of his restrictions. It is permitted, however, to indicate how British prisoners are treated in Germany, and by way of contrast to the manner in which we handle our foes in this country we need do no more than call attention to the following press despatch. We do not for a moment advocate reprisals in kind. Indeed it would be impossible to conceive of British or Canadian authorities acting in such a manner no matter how sore might be the provocation. But when we have the horrible plight of our countrymen in German prisons brought so forcibly to our notice, it is hard to keep one's feelings under control. Perhaps, also, those who heard Capt. Wells speak of his experiences in a German prison camp, during his capture on the war picture in the Empire on Tuesday night, will have experienced the same difficulty. Here is a portion of the despatch referred to

above. It is dated London, April 10, and says:

"The cruelty of the administration of the Wittenberg Camp became notorious. Savage dogs were habitually employed to terrorize the prisoners; flogging with a rubber whip was frequent. Men were struck with little or no provocation and tied to posts with hands above their heads for hours. Captain Lauder reports that many of these men went so far as to look upon the typhus, with all its horrors, as a Godsend. They preferred it to the presence of the German guards."

"The above is a statement taken from a report that has just been issued by the Government committee on the treatment in Germany of British prisoners of war (of which the Hon. Mr. Justice Younger is chairman), and on the conditions prevailing in the Wittenberg Camp during the typhus epidemic of last year.

"The report is based on information from separate prisoners and especially from Major Priestley, Captain Vidal and Captain Lauder, of the army medical corps, who were sent to the camp shortly after the outbreak of the epidemic and were recently released from Germany. The three officers mentioned are the only survivors of six British doctors sent to the Wittenberg camp by the Germans 'to take up,' says the report, 'the place of duty abandoned by their own medical staff when the presence of typhus manifested itself.'

"The records of the epidemic kept by the British officers were taken from them before their departure from Germany, but the reports give in detail the treatment of prisoners and patients, which the American Ambassador, James W. Gerard, in his report last November said, 'Was even more unfavorable than I had been led to expect.'

"According to the released officers there are fifteen thousand and sometimes more prisoners in the camp. There were no proper heating arrangements, and the men were insufficiently clothed, their overcoats having been taken from them, their clothing being in rags. Many had neither boots nor socks. There was an insufficient supply of water, and soap, and Major Priestley says he found the men 'gaunt, of a peculiar grey pallor and verminous.'

"The supply of food also was insufficient, even in the hospital, until supplies arrived from England.

"The only provision for personal cleanliness made for the men,' says the report, 'was one cupful of soft soap issued at intervals of many weeks to a room containing 120. In consequence the men became very verminous and that condition, coupled with cold and want of proper nourishment, was undoubtedly the principal inducing cause of the epidemic.'"

There is much more of the same horrible nature in the report, but there is no use in piling up the vile details. If any young man can read them without being filled with a righteous passion to hurry to the front and do his share in beating these scoundrels into the dust, he must have plenty of blood in his veins.