

## CENSORSHIP AND ESPIONAGE IN WAR.

The censorship bill now under consideration in the American Congress has brought out a great variety of opinions. If what is usually taken to be the "Administration Bill" is adopted in anything like its present form, it will give the President of the United States authority to virtually muzzle the newspapers, and thus deprive the people of much information they have been immemorably accustomed to receive. Of course the President is not bound to exercise to its full extent the power conferred on him, but the whole nation seems reluctant to authorize him to interfere despotically with the popular right of free speech. On the other hand, it is contended, not without reason, that it should be possible, by circumscribing for a time the liberty of publication, to prevent such information from reaching the enemy as would enable him to inflict greater injury on the United States than he might otherwise have been able to do.

Closely connected with this subject is that of foreign and hostile espionage. There can be no doubt that when the war broke out, and for many months before it, Britain was greatly injured by the presence of numberless spies in all ranks of society. Ample evidence has been collected and published to prove that a like condition has existed during the past three years in the United States, in Spain, and in other neutral countries. A good deal of light is thrown on this interesting subject in a letter written by Mr. Norman Hapgood for publication in America. In it he affirms that the British Government has successfully solved the spy problem, and that the persons employed to ferret out the spies are men of highly-trained intellects, including "Oxford and Cambridge dons." There are five societies organized for the purpose, and their membership includes very few women. Amateurs who bring in "tips" are of little use; forty thousand of such tips have, since the beginning of the war, been received and investigated by these societies without affording any real information. The experience of the police is somewhat different, but only one tip in two hundred has turned out to be of much value. In the matter of internment of foreigners, on the other hand, the aid rendered by the police has been of great importance, as they hear of numerous cases in which registered aliens fail to report to the authorities.

These and other matters have been set out in this letter for the information of the United States, which, with its long coastline, will be comparatively easy of access, while there are within the country a large number of aliens who are American citizens, but who sympathize with Germany or Austria-Hungary. For censorship purposes there has been much opening of private letters, but very little about private affairs has ever leaked out. The rules governing this work are very strict and are drastically enforced. One man was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for a little harmless gossip about the contents of a private letter he had opened. Had a bad motive been proved he would have been shot.