

# COURT-MARTIAL FOR AUSTRIANS

## Military Tribunal Hears Cases of Naturalized **Enemy** **Aliens**

### "OBJECTORS" ON CARPET

#### Ground of Nationality Ad- vanced—Willing to Serve as Non-combatants

Fears that he would be shot if he returned to his native land after serving in the Canadian army, was the reason advanced by Pte. Peto Manlak, a naturalized Austrian, before a general court-martial held yesterday at the Armories in answer to a charge of refusing to join the army. The accused soldier's wife lives in Austria and he has two brothers in the Austrian army. In pre-war days he himself served for a year in the Austrian army. Manlak claimed that he had been forced to take out his naturalization papers while employed by the C. P. R. The accused agreed to perform non-combatant service in Canada.

Four naturalized Austrians and two "conscientious objectors" faced yesterday's general court-martial, which was the second to be held in Military District No. 2. All courts-martials are expected to be general ones henceforth. Lieut.-Col. B. H. Belson, O. C., 1st Depot Battalion, 2nd C. O. R., presided over the court and the members of it were Majors C. S. Pote, G. H. Needler and Capts. J. Moss and E. A. Stewart. Lieut.-Col. J. A. MacDonald was the judge-advocate and Capt. W. H. Richards was the prosecutor.

An impression which has got spread abroad that men being tried before the general court-martial are being tried because they are "conscientious objectors" is not correct, according to Col. Bickford, D. O. C.

"The question of conscientious objectors is one which the civil authorities decide," he said. "The men may say they are objectors, but we have nothing to do with it. If the civil judge claims they do not come under the protection they are sent to us to make soldiers of, and if they refuse to put on the uniform we look upon it as the case of a soldier who is refusing to fight."

#### Would Serve as Non-combatant.

Another Austrian, Pte. Steve Pidswadny, advanced the reason of his nationality for refusing to put on the khaki. He has four brothers in the Austrian army, but agreed to perform non-combatant duties in Canada. Pte. Joseph Harodsky, who acted as interpreter for his fellow-Austrians, has a wife in Austria. He expressed his willingness to do non-combatant service when the married men's class is called. Asked how he was going to prove he was married he offered to produce witnesses who had been at the wedding. An Austrian Pole, Pte. M. Ureychuk, through his counsel asked the court to note an objection of "bar of trial." This was to the effect that if it was decided that he is properly within the Military Service Act he would serve. He is also married and claimed to have been forced to sign some papers, and although he had not applied for naturalization papers, was served with them.

Pte. Geo. W. Crawford, in Category "C" and only liable for service in Canada, was a prisoner, and he stated that he could not perform any military duty. He had placed on him the spirit of Jesus Christ ever since a serious illness fourteen years ago. His mother gave evidence as to his good character. Last fall accused was placed in Category "A 2" and later at Niagara in "C 3". Pte. W. K. Steinburg refused to be inoculated. He belongs to the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, which he joined since the outbreak of the war. He refused to do non-combatant services in Canada or be inoculated.