

ALIEN QUESTION IS DIFFICULT

Govt. in Communication With
British Authorities and
Canadians Abroad

LACK OF SHIPPING

Restrictions by Enemy Coun-
tries Also an
Obstacle

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Ottawa, Feb. 4.—With respect to the question of aliens in Canada, which is attracting considerable attention and causing some unrest in certain industrial centres, the following information has been officially obtained:

(1) There are at present in various internment camps throughout the Dominion about two thousand two hundred interned prisoners, of whom seventeen hundred are Germans, the remainder being of Austrian and other enemy nationality. Of the seventeen hundred Germans eight hundred were transferred from the West Indies, and are held at the request of his Majesty's Government. The Government has been advised by Great Britain that repatriation is now possible of a number not exceeding one hundred adult enemy aliens from the Dominion. An order in Council has been passed providing for the deportation of all enemy interned prisoners who may be regarded as dangerous, hostile or undesirable, and this order is now being carried out, subject, of course, to the limitations necessarily imposed by the shortage of shipping and restrictions by enemy countries upon repatriation. Inquiry is also being made of his Majesty's Government for the purpose of obtaining directions as to what disposition they wish to be made of the eight hundred Germans who were transferred from the West Indies.

(2) There is a large number of aliens employed industrially in Canada, principally in the larger centres. Of these many thousands are anxious to return to European countries and are willing to pay their passage if permitted to go. Lack of shipping facilities and passports alone prevent a general exodus of these aliens. The Government has taken up with the Canadian Ministers abroad the question of transportation for this purpose, and also as to whether, pending the official ending of the war, enemy and friendly aliens can be admitted to their respective countries.

(3) Communication has been had with Sir Robert Borden as to the advisability or necessity of providing for a stipulation in the terms of peace which would permit deportation of enemy aliens after the declaration of peace, and any necessary immigration laws against admission of aliens of enemy nationality into Canada. It may prove impracticable for the reasons mentioned in (2) to complete the repatriation of those now interned before the conclusion of peace, and there may be European prohibitions on immigration after the war.

The whole question relating to aliens has been receiving the most careful attention on the part of the Government. It is manifestly a most difficult one to deal with in the present unsettled state of international affairs, with the Peace Conference still engaged in its deliberation, and the shortage of shipping, and the prohibition of entry into European belligerent countries.