

# VETERANS ASK ROWELL MANY QUESTIONS REGARDING ALIENS

## President of Privy Council Points Out International Difficulties of Dealing With the Subject of Foreigners During the War.

By Canadian Associated Press.

PORT HOPE, Ont., Jan. 16.—Hon. N. W. Rowell answered many questions put to him by veterans at his meeting tonight. The meeting was held under the auspices of the G.W.V.A.

At the conclusion of Mr. Rowell's address, questions were invited and William Hood, a former president of the local branch of the G.W.V.A. registered complaints against the preferences extended to foreigners by employers of labor and the failure of the Government to sequester the property of alien enemies, who, including the former Kaiser, it was suggested had millions invested in Canada.

In reply, Mr. Rowell pointed out that Canada had to do one or two things during the war in regard to employment. It was necessary to utilize foreigners in munitions and other industrial work if the supplies were to be furnished the men overseas.

In many cases the aliens did rough work which no Canadians would do and if they had not been employed the work could not have been done. Employers in utilizing the services of foreigners paid them no more than was absolutely necessary and the work was done to the benefit of the country. On the other hand, it was impossible by any amount of money to pay adequately the men who went overseas for the sacrifice they had made. Dealing with the matter of property owned by aliens, Mr. Rowell exploded the bogey that the late Kaiser had large property holdings in this country. It was not true, the speaker said, that Wilhelm had large sums of money tied up in property in this country, otherwise the Government would have taken them over. The whole question of German property had been investigated and all property that was owned by German citizens was taken over by the custodian of ene-

my property. Now that the treaty has been signed the money secured from the sale of such property will be used to liquidate German obligations in this country, as provided by the peace treaty.

### Employed in Public Interest.

Another returned man, Mr. Charles Ough, was not satisfied with the explanation given with regard to the foreigners. He did not think it was right that aliens should have been allowed to draw big money during the war and to hold the jobs now while returned men could not get work. Mr. Rowell repeated that it was in the public interest that the foreigners were employed. This was admitted by his interrogator, whereupon Mr. Rowell replied that the only question then was what should have been the amount of pay.

In further explanation Mr. Rowell said that the alternative to paying the wages demanded was industrial co-operation. The government had investigated whether it would be possible to introduce such a measure to be applicable to alien enemies and it was found that under international agreements this could not be done unless Canadians were treated similarly.

### Reprisals on Prisoners.

The British government was communicated with and they advised after investigation that they feared if industrial conscription were applied to enemy aliens it would result in reprisals on prisoners of war in Germany.

"That does not interfere with helping the returned soldiers at the present time does it and to place them in positions which they could have had had they stayed at home and had cold feet like some others," was the final retort of Mr. Ough. He got no answer.

Mr. W. T. R. Preston was told that the plebiscite on prohibition under the Dominion act would be taken on the Dominion lists on which women would be included.