

WERE RUSSIANS BUT POSED AS AUSTRIANS

When Taken Prisoners of War,
However, Members of Crew
Revealed Identity

"We are Russian subjects and therefore demand our freedom." Such was the message conveyed by the military authorities yesterday to the Imperial Russian Consulate, on behalf of William Bornat and John Veller, who are now detained in the military prison on St. Antoine street.

William and John, although Russian subjects, from the province of Latwash, on the Baltic Sea, signed aboard a tramp steamer at Bristol. In a spirit of good-fellowship for their Austrian companions, who outnumbered them fifteen to two, William and John signed on, also as Austrians. This evidence of goodwill on their part towards Austria permitted the journey to be made without any breaking of Russian trade.

On the arrival of the steamer, however, the military authorities took charge of all those registered as Austrians and conducted them under military guard to the military prison, which is temporarily located in the immigration building on St. Antoine street. Here the two supposedly Austrian subjects thought over the situation, in such an effective manner as to cause Major Date to communicate the message, referred to above, to the Russian Consulate Office.

The Consul-General had the case investigated by a member of the consular staff, who found that the men were in much dread, because of their ignorance of the language and conditions existing in Canada.

Their own story, as told to the member of the consular staff and the military officials, is that, in order to procure employment upon one of the steamers coming to this port, they registered as Austrians, because nearly all the members of the crew were of that nationality.

Finding themselves on arrival here made prisoners of war, they soon sought an occasion to communicate with the Consul-General.

It was established yesterday that the men were telling the truth, being true enough Russian subjects. In consequence, the kindly offices of the consulate staff will again be enlisted today in order to straighten out the whole case preparatory to giving the men their freedom.