

# ALIEN PRISONERS MAY BE EMPLOYED

Proposal to Put Them to Work  
on Road Between Monashee  
and Edgewood.

## FOUR HUNDRED COMING

Harry Stevens, M. P., Visits the  
Vernon Internment Prison to  
Report on Capacity for Receiv-  
ing a Large Number of Prison-  
ers—Board of Trade Endorses  
General Otter's Proposal to  
Use These Men in Building  
Roads, and Wires Resolution  
to Victoria.

Harry Stevens, M. P., of Vancouver, and Major Wilson were in Vernon on Saturday on business connected with the enlargement of the internment prison here, where about 150 alien Germans and Austrians are now under restraint. They were met at the station by Major Clarke and Mr. Price Ellison, and after making an inspection of the prison and surrounding grounds, they returned to the coast by the afternoon train.

Mr. Stevens stated to the News that he had been asked to report by the Ottawa authorities regarding the facilities for enlarging the camp here, as it is proposed to send between three and four hundred additional prisoners to this point. Major-General Otter has forwarded to Mr. Stevens a proposal that these men be put at work on the projected wagon road between Monashee and Edgewood. The Dominion authorities will furnish rations for the prisoners and provide guards for them if the Provincial Government will pay them at the rate of 25 cents per day when employed on this work.

Mr. Stevens was assured by Major Clarke that ample facilities can easily be afforded here for looking after this number of prisoners, it being proposed to erect sheds or huts for their accommodation on the grounds surrounding the prison, and Mr. Stevens stated that he would recommend that such arrangements be carried into effect at once. He also strongly favored the idea of putting them to work on the roads, as he considered it a shame that such men should be kept in idleness at the country's expense.

### The Edgewood Road.

Mr. Ellison also considered that much might be said in favor of this proposal. The road from Monashee to Edgewood, which would connect this district with that settlement on Arrow Lake, has long been asked for, but under existing conditions there is no chance of the Provincial Government undertaking the work in the usual way. The 20 odd miles of road that would have to be built to connect Monashee and Edgewood might, however, he stated, be constructed by this means, as the expense to the province would be very light if the aliens were put to work on the job. It would furnish a road that otherwise would not be built perhaps for many years, and would give a good deal of employment to teams in this district, to say nothing of the amount that would be expended in the purchase of provisions and supplies.

We understand that the Provincial Government now has the matter under consideration, and it seems reasonable to expect that this plan, which has much to commend it, will be carried into effect this summer.

### Endorsed by Board of Trade.

Since the above was in print, the matter has been brought to the attention of the Vernon Board of Trade, and at a large meeting held last night, after hearing Col. Harrington and J. W. Ford of Edgewood place their case before the Board, a resolution was wired to the Hon. Theo. Taylor, Min-

later of Works, urging that General Otter's proposal be acted upon.

In calling the meeting to order, President O'Brien said that the Council of the Board had recently dealt with a letter from Edgewood on this subject, but it being held by some that the unemployed in the district should be given work before engaging alien prisoners on road construction, the Board did not endorse the resolution forwarded by Edgewood. Since then, however, it had been the feeling of many members that there were few unemployed here that would be affected, and if the road was not built in this manner the work would not be carried on at all, and if alien prisoners were employed for the work, other men might get employment as guards, etc. He would ask Col Harrington and Mr. Ford to address the meeting.

#### **The Edgewood Delegates.**

These gentlemen then spoke, and in a very lucid and forcible manner presented their case. They were afterwards complimented by several of the members of the Board on the able manner in which they had handled the subject.

They dwelt upon the fact that this was not merely a local matter confined to Edgewood, but that resolutions in favor of the project had been obtained from the whole of Fire Valley, and from Nelson, Burton City and Nakusp. In Fire Valley about 200 settlers had signed the petition, while upwards of 1,000 names had been obtained in Nelson. The opportunity thus afforded, they felt, might never come again, and if not taken advantage of the road would probably not be built for years.

#### **Telephone Communications.**

Mr. Ford dwelt upon the advantage which co-operative fruit marketing would receive from telephone communication between the Okanagan and Kootenay, which would follow the construction of this road. It would also save 24 hours in making the journey to Arrow Lake points. He gave statistics regarding the great natural resources of the district to be opened up by such a road, and stated that there were also from 12 to 15 thousand acres of land that would be made available for settlement, as well as much good timber land. It was only 80 miles from Vernon to Edgewood over this route, and there would only be 21 miles of road to build at this end to connect with Fire Valley.

#### **Resolution Forwarded.**

G. A. Henderson then moved that the meeting heartily endorse the proposal and that a committee composed of J. A. MacKelvie, S. A. Shatford and P. Dickson be appointed to draft a resolution and forward it to the proper authorities. S. C. Smith strongly seconded the motion, other speakers in its favor being Jas. Vallance, Geo. Heggie, A. O. Cochrane, S. A. Shatford and J. A. MacKelvie.

The motion was carried unanimously, and a telegram to this effect was immediately forwarded to the Hon. Thos. Taylor.

It was the general opinion of the meeting that it was only fair to put these alien prisoners to some useful work, and that if they were not employed here they would be moved to some other part of the province where their services could be utilized. It was also held that the unemployed problem does not seriously affect this district there being likely to be more work for men on the farms and orchards this season than men for the work, and that employment as guards would also further decrease the number of transient unemployed in the district.