

THE KITCHENER TROUBLE

The present disturbance at Kitchener, Ont., would not have occurred at all except for politics. If it had not been for politics, the Enemy Alien Act would have been put into effect in Waterloo County as it was put into effect in Toronto and elsewhere in the early days of the war. A few objectionable enemy aliens there would have been interned as similar men here were interned, and all would have gone smoothly thereafter.

A few bitter enemy sympathizers, however, were allowed to run at large among a people of German race and speech in a city of Prussian name, and they whispered among and worked upon the traditions and predilections of foolish men. Plenty of warning was given of what was happening. The City Council, alarmed for the future and the reputation of the city and county, twice called upon the Government to enforce the Enemy Alien Act, there as elsewhere, and rope in those who were known to be sowing the seeds of mischief. The Star continually urged the Government to put the law into effect, and not, by neglecting the warning of the Berlin Council, burden itself with responsibility for what evil might ensue.

Politics, however, got in its work. Those influential with the Government went to Ottawa and induced the leaders of the party to "go easy." They wanted to "hold the German vote." The leaders of the party in office wanted them to "hold" that vote, and the pro-Germans of Berlin were given every encouragement to believe that owing to party politics they could just about say and do as they liked, because both political parties thought even more about catching the German vote in this country than doing anything else. So these aliens among us have played politics against us for all they are worth.

They had succeeded last summer in knifing the scheme for changing the city's name. They had the whole scheme confined and screwed down, but The Star broke in on the scene with editorials exposing the double dealing, and, aided by one sudden and effective editorial in the Mail and Empire one morning the same afternoon saw the Ontario Government put through the necessary order changing the name of Berlin. And it stays changed as long as the graves of Canadians remain in Flanders.

Discussion will not mend this matter. The game of politics has been played in this affair and mischief has resulted, as we over and over again vainly warned the Government would be the case. There will be worse to follow, too, unless the Government does its duty by interning the ring-leaders of enemy activity in Kitchener.

The whole case illustrates the incapacity of a party Government to handle situations rough-handed. These pro-Germans are able to play politics, to play one party against another, to trade on the Government's fear of the Opposition when next election comes around. If we had the non-partizan war administration the country needs, there would be none of this. A War Ministry, formed regardless of politics, would leave cut and useless all the wires that partizans pull.—Toronto Star.