

Canada's Response to Aliens of Enemy Nationality Enemies during
the First World War—the Internment Operations Office and Registration System

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Introduction

No policy had been laid in advance, either in the United Kingdom or in Canada, as to the treatment of enemy aliens in the event of war...

*The Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1919*¹

Immediately after Great Britain's 4 August, 1914 declaration of war against Germany, the military was called upon to secure Canada's borders. This included preventing the return of German reservists to their home units in Germany. When war was declared against Austria-Hungary, the military's responsibilities were extended to include reservists from this country. Almost immediately, the Canadian government realized the enormity of the task it faced in dealing with over one hundred thousand men living in Canada who were not British subjects.

Despite not having an immediate policy, the Canadian government looked to British guidance and precedent to introduce laws to control aliens of enemy nationality. After the *War Measures Act, 1914* was introduced and passed in the Canadian Parliament, the government used the powers granted to Cabinet to pass thousands of Orders-in-Council (OC). These OCs dealt with matters as mundane as agreeing to the purchase of chocolate for the military in Halifax to the more serious introduction of various laws to deal with aliens of enemy nationality.

After a brief introduction to the military's role in the registration and internment of aliens of enemy nationality, this paper introduces two important and newly discovered documents and provides examples of how the information from those documents was applied by two new organizations established to deal with the registration and internment of aliens of enemy nationality—the registration offices and the Internment Operations Office.

¹ Past its opening comment, the Official History continues, over its five page history of "Action Taken with Respect to Enemy Aliens in Canada, 1914-1920", with a fact and figures recount of Otter's final report with no additional evaluation of Canada's internment operations. Army Historical Section, *The Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1919: Action Taken in Respect to Enemy Aliens in Canada: 1914-1920*, Library Archives Canada (LAC), Department of National Defence (DND) fonds, Army Historical Section, RG24, 1755, DHS 10-10C, 1.

The first document to be reviewed is the Justice Department's direction to registrars with respect to the registration of alien enemies and their cooperation with the existing system.

Although a detailed review of the functioning of each registration office is beyond the scope of this paper, examples of how they carried out their role as well as a summary, highlighting critical facts about each office, is included.

An examination of the Internment Operations Office's role in the registration and internment process will focus on that office's initial standing order. Every military organization issues a standing or operations order to its subordinate formations and the Internment Operations Office, under command of a retired military general, did the same, providing a standing order to its subordinate formations, the internment camp and station commandants. Examples from a review of camp operations will highlight some of the elements from that standing order. More than 30 amendments to the initial standing order have been discovered. A listing of the amendments to the initial January, 1915 standing order is also provided.

A copy of these documents was provided to the military.

Canada's Initial Response

As the war began, the governments of Great Britain and Canada found, living and working amongst them, tens of thousands of unnaturalized residents, aliens of enemy nationality, citizens of a country with which they were at war. Over the following several weeks and into the next year, tens of thousands of additional aliens of enemy nationality would be added to the list as the United Kingdom declared war on the Austria-Hungary (12 August, 1914), on Turkey (5 November, 1914) and on Bulgaria (15 October, 1915).²

² Secretary of State of Canada, *Copies of Proclamations, Orders in Council and Documents Relating to the European War* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1915), 10, 38, 146 and Secretary of State of Canada, *Copies of Proclamations, Orders in Council and Documents Relating to the European War* (2nd sup., Government Printing Bureau, 1916), 802.

An undated government memorandum provides insight into the size and scale of the potential problem confronting the Canadian government. This report indicated that:

1. based upon the results of the 1911 census, there were 393,320 Germans and 129,103 Austro-Hungarians living in Canada;
2. of these, approximately 10% of the Germans and 60% of those Austro-Hungarians had been born in their respective countries (nearly 120,000); and
3. in Manitoba and Alberta one-sixth of the population was either of German or Austro-Hungarian origin, while in Saskatchewan it is more than 20%.³

Despite these numbers, the memo attempts to dispel potential fears by adding that “persons of German or Austro-Hungarian origin born in Canada regard themselves as Canadian citizens and take the same pride and interest in the welfare of this country as citizens of British descent” and that those born in the countries with which Canada was now at war “have come to Canada for the purpose of making this Dominion their adopted country”. Although, “under the laws of their country they can apparently be called on for military service although resident and naturalized in Canada ... they have no love for military service and they appreciate the freer conditions and more liberal institutions which they enjoy in this country.” The report concludes that “few of them might be disposed to return for this purpose as a patriotic duty...”

A review of later government records sadly proves that this initial assessment was largely disregarded by Canada’s military, police and justice system.

This report then discusses the “distress and destitution” found primarily amongst the Austro-Hungarians including a comment that the Austro-Hungarian government’s thought of this large group of former citizens as “ignorant and illiterate peasants who are greatly alarmed by the conditions which confront them since the outbreak of war.”

³ LAC, Borden Papers, MG 26, H1(a), v. 46, 21021 – 21022.

This undated memo was likely written after the 15 August, 1914 proclamation as it concludes that the government's position, as expressed in that proclamation, is the wisest and most reasonable course to take.

This proclamation sought to allay the fears felt by members of the targeted communities by stating that as long as they pursue their daily lives they will not be arrested or detained unless they engage in espionage or other hostile acts. Except for detaining any reservists attempting to rejoin their colours and then releasing them on parole, the memo adds that harsher measures would be ineffective and would require thousands of police to effectively control the border with the United States.

The first threat assessment—that there was little risk of reservists returning to join the colours of their birth countries—was repeated at the highest government levels and yet, was the very cause of arrest, detention and internment of many of those brought before registrars or the police.

The second assessment, destitution amongst the Austro-Hungarians, was also found to be the cause of arrest for many of those who were interned.

Until the 15 August, 1914 proclamation, the powers of arrest and detention were limited to the military.

This proclamation authorized members of the Dominion Police, the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP), and others appointed by the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police to arrest and detain aliens of enemy nationality.

A new form called the Undertaking was also introduced by this proclamation. This document was signed by aliens of enemy nationality and used emphasize to them the importance of complying with Canadian law as well as setting out their police reporting requirements.

To keep track of the internment of aliens of enemy nationality by Canadian military units the military command, on 27 August, 1914, ordered each military district to provide a weekly report. This report included the number of German, Austro-Hungarian and other reservists who have been interned, the place of the internment, the regimental name of the guards, and their numbers.⁴

By the time P.C. 2721 was passed 28 October, 1914, ten thousand aliens of enemy nationality were either interned or placed on parole by the military.⁵ Internees and those required to report were cared for locally as each military district found suitable and secure buildings to deal with their own local situation.⁶ The Militia also provided the guards for those facilities.

District Intelligence Officers played an important role in tracking and assessing alien enemy issues and despite the later transfer of responsibility for registration and internment to civilian authorities, their role continued throughout the war.

As the military established its internment processes and camps the government continued to appreciate the enormity of the alien of enemy nationality issue.

In a coded cable, sent 20 August, 1914, Borden wrote the British Foreign Office that the German and Austrian situation, “particularly Austrian (was) very difficult”.⁷ The government expected between fifty thousand and one hundred thousand to be out of work during the winter. Public opinion was forcing employers to release them. Borden accepted his government’s responsibility for their condition by adding that “they have been attracted and indeed invited to Canada by (the) Immigration Department and now they find themselves without employment and yet forbidden to obtain it in the United States – we must either provide them with work or

⁴ LAC, DND, MD10, RG24, 4588, 15-169-22, v. 1, Circular Letter, The Adjutant-General, Canadian Militia to D.O.C., M.D. No. 10, Winnipeg, Man., 27 August, 1914.

⁵ Army Historical Section, 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ LAC, Borden Papers, RLB 673-674(2), MG26, H1 (C), v. 191, 106258.

feed them otherwise they will become desperate and resort to crime.”(sic) Borden concludes the cable advising the Colonial Office that the Canadian government is prepared to allow them to leave to the United States.

This is a very serious question for the Canadian government especially “if they were interned, the cost of keeping such a large number would be a serious burden, but on the other hand it would never do for them to be allowed out of British territory if there is any real likelihood of their actually being able to return to their own countries to fight against us.”⁸ The issue of cost was a constant issue for the Canada’s director of internment operations.

Borden waited for advice from the Colonial Office. On 26 October, 1914, they responded by advising that “the better course would be to detain them within the limits of the Dominion”⁹ otherwise, they would find their way into the enemy’s front lines.

Two days later, Cabinet approved P.C. 2721 providing for the establishment of registration centres in Canada.

Registration Centres

On 30 October, 1914, two days after Canada’s Minister of Justice, Charles J. Doherty, was given the authority to designate cities as sites for registering aliens of enemy nationality, he advised his Cabinet colleagues that he had used those powers to designate nine locations.¹⁰ In Nova Scotia – Sydney, in Quebec - Montreal, in Ontario - Ottawa, Fort William and Welland, in

⁸ Ibid., 106260-106261.

⁹ Ibid., 106262.

¹⁰ Section 1 of Order in Council P.C. 2721 (28 October, 1914) provides that the Minister of Justice may designate any place in Canada as a registration centre and can decide when it opens and closes, however, Cabinet approval is required to appoint a registrar for those centres. As a result, any OC related to this section needs to be carefully read as the text of those OCs are worded asking Cabinet’s approval to allow the proclamation of the centre not its designation. Cabinet’s power to designate the registrar was expressed either via a stand-alone OC such as P.C. 2774 appointing Silas H. Carpenter as Montreal’s registrar or approving the proclamation of the location’s designation along with the registrar’s appointment. An example of this is P.C. 2923, when on 20 November, 1914, Cabinet approved a Proclamation announcing Brandon’s designation and in the same OC exercising its power, designating William Bourque as Brandon’s registrar.

Manitoba – Winnipeg, in Saskatchewan – Regina and in Alberta – Edmonton and Calgary.

Toronto, Ontario was designated on 10 November, 1914, Canada's Pacific coast was included with Victoria, British Columbia's designation on 13 November, 1914 and Brandon, Manitoba was added as that province's second registration centre on 19 November, 1914.

P.C. 2721 (amended three weeks later by P.C. 2920¹¹) set out the roles and responsibilities of those who were to play a part in the designation process.

Once Doherty designated a city and Cabinet appointed the registrar, Doherty was given the authority to appoint the various registration office staff. The Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Percy Sherwood, already part of the Justice Department, was put in charge of the registrars and the registration centres.

The registrars were granted quasi-judicial responsibilities. They were just to record information about each alien of enemy nationality within their city and surrounding areas, but were tasked with determining whether that person should be interned (with or without family) or released. If released an Undertaking was signed usually requiring reporting to police on a regular basis. The decision, whether to intern or release and on what terms was to be made after the registrar collected the information about the person appearing before him. Registrars could also authorize aliens of enemy nationality to leave Canada by granting them a new document, an Exeat.

Aliens of enemy nationality living within or being in one of the cities designated as a registration centre were required to report as soon as possible after the proclamation was published in the Canada Gazette announced the opening of a registration centre in their home

¹¹ P.C. 2920, passed by Cabinet 20 November, 1914, allowed the Registrar to require aliens of enemy nationality to report to a Registrar instead of a Chief of Police, provided the wording and form of the Undertaking, better defined that aliens of enemy nationality had to report within the one month after a registration office was opened in their city and excluded those who had sworn an Oath of Allegiance or who were Armenian Christians from those who had to register and report.

city. They had one month to report otherwise they could automatically be interned or, in the alternative, prosecuted in the criminal courts for failing to register.

The Minister of Justice's role and responsibilities were delegated to the Deputy Minister of Justice, Edmund Leslie Newcombe, and as every new registrar was appointed he sent them an information package.

This package included a copy of the Order in Council appointing them registrar, a four page listing of their responsibilities, and a copy of P.C. 2721, referred to by Newcombe as the Alien Enemies Registration Ordinance. Towards the end of November, 1914, a copy of the 15 August, 1914 Proclamation was also provided.

The roles and responsibilities letter first confirms that a certain city has been designated as a place where an office of registration is to be established and that the recipient was appointed registrar for that location. He is also advised that he is to be familiar and to comply with the new law. The Department of Justice's expectations are then outlined over the next four pages.

The registrar's first task is to find a suitable office for the purpose of registration preferably in a publicly owned facility. If there is no suitable space available the registrar could look to the commercial market for space, however, "with due regard to economy as well as efficiency." The registrar was given reasonable discretion to let space, "which of course you will understand to be merely temporary, upon fair terms." Cost savings were also a feature of the instructions to the registrars.

Staffing was next with Newcombe emphasizing that the Minister and not the registrar is the authority for hiring assistants, clerks and other officers as may be necessary. These people "may be hired upon reasonable terms." To emphasize that the role of the registrar and his staff was not

a police role, the letter specifically states that they are to ask the local police for police assistance if they find it necessary.

To keep control of expenditures, the letter then emphasizes that once a place and staff have been found, ministerial approval is required before payment can be made.

Sherwood's role is also outlined indicating that his office will send the registrar the notices advertising the registration requirement, a registration book and any additional forms required as part of the process. These additional forms included Exeat forms, letterhead and Identification Cards. The notices are to be placed "in the public places where they are most likely to be seen by persons required to register."

After ensuring administrative concerns were addressed, Newcombe emphasized the registrar's role in this process:

You will realize that the duties of the Registrar are not merely clerical. Their proper discharge demands that he should make due enquiry to ascertain the facts and exercise judgment and therefore it is necessary that he should personally consider the particulars of each case.

The new document, the Exeat, was the next item which was brought to the attention of the registrars. These are to be issued in proper cases. Newcombe adds that although the registrar is authorized by law to issue this departure document, "the Government desire that this authority should not be exercised in any doubtful case."(sic) The intention is to control the flow of reservists leaving the country and others who might provide information to the enemy. These people should be detained.

By the time these letters were forwarded, Major General Sir William Otter had already been appointed as the Officer Commanding Internment Operations and Newcombe advises the registrars that Otter will be contact with them with respect to internment arrangements in their area and that they should advise Otter or his contact who is being interned.

The registrars were encouraged to proceed with the registration as quickly as possible, “consistent with the well-doing of the work” and if any alien of enemy nationality fails to register, then their names and descriptions are to be reported.

The next paragraph in this long letter dealt with the registrar’s place in a system which had been already in place for three or four months:

The Registrars [*sic*] will of course endeavour to discharge their duties in harmony with those of the military and police. The present Ordinance is not intended to supercede, or to modify the Proclamation of 15th August last, except in so far as it imposes generally the obligation to register and report. It is possible that aliens of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality will apply for registration who have been subject to detention and who have been released subject to the undertaking required by the said Proclamation [*sic*]. Any such cases should be specially considered in connection with the officer who authorized the release or received the undertaking and the outstanding undertaking should if necessary be modified so as to conform to the requirements of the Ordinance.

The letter’s last few paragraphs deal with additional administrative and financial matters requiring registrars to certify expenditures which will be paid by the department after audit, and ensure that reports and correspondence are forwarded to Sherwood.

They were advised that the final item, registrars’ pay, would not be settled for several months.

A review of the Justice Department files for all the cities designated as alien of enemy nationality registration sites, confirms that the registrars immediately began to exercise their authority. Unfortunately, as there was no standardized final report which could be used to compare the operations of each office, examples from the registration office files are used to provide some insight into how the registrars accepted their roles and resolved issues arising in their areas of responsibility.

Issues Resulting from Registrar Instructions

Accommodations

One of the first steps taken by all registrars was to establish an office. It is clear that they read the Justice material because one of the first things many did was to approach representatives of the Public Works Department or local authorities to secure office space. Typical was Judge Coatsworth's experience in Toronto.

His information package, dated 18 November, 1914, was received two days later. On 21 November, he writes Newcombe advising him that he approached local Public Works officials who advised that there was no federal government space available in Toronto, unless he wanted to establish the office in the Imperial Loan Company Building, adjacent to the Post Office building. This building has been expropriated for future Post Office building expansion.¹²

Coatsworth also checked with City of Toronto staff who advised him that no space available as their facilities were already overcrowded. Weighing the fact that the proposed Public Works site could cost up to \$200 to renovate and being mindful of the direction with respect to cost, Coatsworth found another site costing \$30-\$40 per month to rent.

He also confirmed that part of the decision was that as stated in the Justice note, this office would remain open for only a few months.

Newcombe's agreed that it would be more cost effective to rent month by month, the location seemed more suitable and that there would be less delay in establishing the registration office by renting instead of renovating.¹³

¹² LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 248, 1173. E. Coatsworth, Registrar to E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, 21 November, 1914.

¹³ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 248, 1173. E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice to E. Coatsworth, Registrar, 23 November, 1914.

Regina's newly appointed registrar, RNWMP Inspector Belcher, ran into similar difficulties. After the Deputy Minister of Public Works, provincial and municipal officials advised him that no rooms were available he arranged to rent a room in the centre of the city for \$40 per month.¹⁴

On the Pacific coast, Major Ridgeway Wilson, did not find any government offices available and rented an office at \$20.00 per month.¹⁵

Edmonton's Registrar, RNWMP Inspector G.L. Jennings, was able to secure public space and occupied city offices in the New Civic Market Building on First Street.¹⁶ This centrally located office cost \$25.00 per month rent which also included light and heat.

Brandon's Registrar was also fortunate to find an office available in a public works building.¹⁷

Staff

It was relatively easy for the registrars to find staff by hiring people they knew or who were recommended by interested parties.

In Toronto, Coatsworth informed Newcombe that he had hired two staff members, subject to Newcombe's approval—Captain John Wandless as Clerk at \$25 per week and Mr. A.G. Newell as stenographer at \$15 per week. Both these men had been recommended to him, Wandless by the Dominion Liberal-Conservative Association for Ontario¹⁸ and Newell¹⁹ by the Central Liberal-Conservative Association of Toronto.

¹⁴ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 159, T.S. Belcher to The Deputy Minister of Justice, Ottawa, 25 November, 1914.

¹⁵ LAC, Justice fonds, RG 13, 190, 33, W.R. Wilson, Registrar to E.C. Newcombe, 30 November, 1914.

¹⁶ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 158, G.L. Jennings to A.P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, Ottawa, 14 December, 1914.

¹⁷ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 235, 1021, Telegram Wm. Bourke, Registrar to Deputy Minister of Justice, 1 December, 1914.

¹⁸ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 1173, The Dominion Liberal-Conservative Association for Ontario to Judge Coatsworth, 20 November, 1914. Coatsworth was advised that Wadless could speak fluent German, has

Regina's Belcher also had F. Edwards recommended to him to serve as both a clerk and stenographer at \$75.00 per month²⁰ although no indication is given who made the recommendation. Belcher wrote Newcombe about both his office and staff situation who agreed with the office costing \$40.00 per month, however, he questioned hiring a clerk at that rate suggesting that a good clerk could be found for \$50.00 to \$60.00 per month.²¹ Financial records from Regina's office confirm that F. Edwards continued to be paid the \$75.00 per month despite Newcombe's initial objection.

An important member of the Registrar's staff was the interpreter.

Belcher solved the problem in Regina of having to deal with both German and Austro-Hungarian (Ukrainian) aliens of enemy nationality by hiring Joseph Webber as a German interpreter at \$40.00 per month and Edward Dutkowsky as Ruthenian and Austrian interpreter at \$50.00 per month. Dutkowsky also assisted as a clerk.

RNWMP Inspector Jennings in Edmonton advised Sherwood that it was difficult to find an interpreter who could speak both the German and Austrian languages and finding an Austrian interpreter upon whom he could depend was proving problematic.²² A week later, he had hired a German interpreter who also worked for him as a clerk at \$12.00 per week while the one

considerable knowledge of police methods having spent time with the South African Constabulary, was a South African war veteran, is a Captain of the 36 Peel Regiment and editor of a trade journal.

¹⁹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 1173, Central Liberal-Conservative Association of Toronto to Judge Coatsworth, 23 November, 1914. The recommendation for Newall did not set out his qualifications for the position simply that he be appointed. Newall's address was Terauley Chambers and his phone numbers were Main 7776 and his home phone was College 8427.

²⁰ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 159, T.S. Belcher to Deputy Minister of Justice, Ottawa, 25 November, 1914.

²¹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 159, Deputy Minister of Justice to Inspector T.S. Belcher, 3 December, 1914.

²² LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 158, G.L. Jennings to A.P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, Ottawa, 14 December, 1914.

interpreter for the Austrian, Hungarian and Galician languages was hired at the rate of \$10.00 per week.²³

Notices, Forms, Registration Books

Not waiting for material to arrive from Ottawa, Regina's registrar placed an order with a local printing company for six cards suitable for posting information about the office. It cost \$2.75 which, in accordance with his Justice instructions, he certified as "goods received price fair and just."

Judge Coatsworth received his supplies by 23 November, 1914, had a clerk and stenographer hired and was waiting for the issue of premises to be finalized.²⁴

How these various forms were used is found in a report prepared by Toronto's second registrar, A.J. Russell Snow.²⁵

Snow explains that each alien of enemy nationality's registration requires entering the person's full particulars in the registration book, making out a parole card and two copies of the Undertaking, all of which are signed by the registrar. Aliens of enemy nationality also reported to their office, some weekly, some semi-monthly and others monthly and when they came in to report, each person's report was entered in the registration book and on the parole card. To assist their work the Toronto office staff had developed an index allowing them to locate the name of the alien enemy in the registration book that much easier.

As aliens of enemy nationality always seemed on the move looking for work, the Toronto office also updated the initial registration forms with new information ensuring addresses are

²³ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 158, G.L. Jennings, Registrar to Chief Commissioner of Police, Ottawa, 19 December, 1914.

²⁴ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A2, 248, 1173, Telegram E. Coatsworth, Registrar of Alien Enemies to Deputy Minister of Justice, 23 November, 1914.

²⁵ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A2, 248, 1173, A.J. Russell Snow, Registrar to E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister Justice, Ottawa, 11 February, 1915.

correct. “There are also many who change their addresses, go to work on farms outside the City, or go to other places in search of work. This necessitates changes in our registry book, and we must write letters to various local authorities in their jurisdiction.”²⁶

This office also issued 360 registration certificates for naturalization, in triplicate, to meet the requirements of s. 11 of P.C. 2721 and forty-four Exeats were issued. Not every Exeat was approved as eight were denied.

Snow’s report also justifies his increased cost for postage and letterhead advising that the Toronto office regularly writes to the 130 postmasters found within a 20 miles radius of Toronto including a notice the first week of February, 1915 “to the effect that all aliens not registering by February 15th would be liable to internment as Prisoners of War.” He also regularly wrote letters to officials in the various jurisdictions where the alien of enemy nationality had moved looking for work.

Reporting to Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police

Snow’s 11 February, 1915 report to Newcombe also confirms his understanding that Sherwood was responsible for the registration process and indicates that the Toronto office makes “a daily report of the number of registrations, internments, exeats, granted, etc.” to Sherwood and “carry on a fair amount of correspondence” with that office.²⁷

A review of the records from the other registrars shows that for routine matters relating to registration and reporting they wrote to Sherwood while for issues arising from their initial instructions, the hiring and firing of staff , or unusual issues such as uniforms for registrars and their staff, they wrote directly to the Deputy Minister of Justice.

²⁶ Ibid., 2.

²⁷ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A2, 248, 1173, A.J. Russell Snow, Registrar to E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister Justice, Ottawa, 11 February, 1915, 3.

Execution of Quasi-Judicial Role

Prior to these instructions being forwarded to the newly appointed registrars, a draft dated 13 November, 1914 was submitted for the Newcombe's review without this role being included. This paragraph, establishing their quasi-judicial function, was the only hand-written amendment:

You will realize that the duties of the Registrars are not merely clerical. Their proper discharge demands that he also make due enquiry to ascertain the facts and exercise judgment and therefore it is necessary that he should personally consider the particulars of each case.

A review of files from different sources leaves one with the impression that the registrars took their role seriously and accepted the quasi-judicial nature of their position. One senses that as a result of the fact that a number of the registrars were lawyers and others were RNWMP officers (who were appointed justices of the peace in the jurisdiction where they were stationed) they knew what was expected of them.

The clearest explanation of how they approached their position is found in Snow's report where he describes his process in exercising this quasi-judicial function:

... I have spent more time for the last four weeks in connection with the granting of exeat and internments than during the previous months I have been engaged in the work. Every day there are several persons brought in by the police to be interned and in nearly every case, after going into it thoroughly and hearing the evidence, I dismiss them. It is only in the exceptional cases I have interned, which I think is the proper course.²⁸

Snow was a lawyer.

The exercise of this function is also set out in an 11 February, 1915 report from Winnipeg which also provides some insight into the operations of the office:

The hours of registration are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., and although long and fatiguing, are cheerfully complied with by myself and staff, especially as much work has to be done after those hours. Up to the time of writing there have been registered at this office 6,430 [sic] since

²⁸ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A2, 248, 1173, A.J.Russell Snow, Registrar to E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, Ottawa, 29 May, 1915.

the third of December last – part of the time with a smaller staff. It takes from 10 to 15 minutes to get the information you require from most of the Austrian Galicians who are, as a rule, grossly ignorant, at least a third of them not being able to sign their own name.

Added to the registration, it requires the time of one clerk to look after permissions to many Austrians to go either to relatives to spend the winter months, or to places where they have found work, and to arrange for their reporting to some magistrate, postmaster, police or other official, during their absence from the Winnipeg district. The improvement in the weather, the commencement of farming operations, the formation of the Patriotic Wood Camp to relieve unemployment, have all contributed to make this phase of the work heavier, and 300 such permissions to leave the city have already been granted after careful investigation.²⁹

Exeat

As soon as news reports circulated announcing the appointment of the registrars and their responsibility to issue exeats, the Justice department immediately received a letter from a Toronto lawyer asking to be provided a copy of this new document.³⁰ The other question which was asked was whether it is a form of an Order or a Writ. Considering how quickly one law firm wrote the Justice Department, presumably they had someone who intended to apply to leave Canada. The lawyer was advised on 21 November that the form has been prepared and sent to the Dominion Police to distribute to the registrars explaining that if Coatsworth had not already received the form then he should receive it in the next day or two.

On 25 November, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice receives another letter from the same Toronto lawyer advising that the Toronto registrar had still not received Exeats and could some be sent as he has a client waiting to apply for one.

²⁹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 201, 603, Registrar to Alien Enemies, Winnipeg, Man. to Chief Commissioner of Police, Ottawa, 11 February, 1915, 2-3.

³⁰ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 248, 1173, Eric. N. Armour, Bristol and Armour, Barristers and Solicitors to W. Stuart Edwards, Deputy Minister of Justice, 18 November, 1914.

Coordination with Police

This issue arose early in the process and the government's position is succinctly set out in a Justice memorandum from Newcombe to Sherwood to deal with a situation developing in Toronto.³¹

He first suggests that the police should meet the registrars and "come to an understanding so that there would be no overlapping or conflict of authority." This note confirms that the registrars have received their instructions to work "in harmony with the military and police, and all persons concerned should approach this project of looking after alien enemies with a disposition to work out the regulations effectively without jealousy or friction."

Newcombe emphasizes that the registrars, whose task it is to record those aliens enemy nationality in their jurisdiction and separate those who should be interned from those who should be paroled, is not a "permanent institution." The military will look after those who are to be interned while the parolees need to know to whom they are to report "and there is plenty of scope for the activities of the Registrars, the police and the military without interfering unduly with each other if they will only act in conjunction. I think that the exercise of a little common sense in these proceeding would tend to facilitate operations."

The memo hints at a potential or perhaps already brewing conflict between Judge Coatsworth, Toronto's first Registrar, and Chief Grasett of the City of Toronto Police Department. Newcombe suggests that this issue may have arisen as the Toronto police had already established a registration system prior to the introduction of the Order in Council and adds that the two of them should meet and determine how the information from the police system could be made available to Coatsworth. "Generally speaking it was my understanding that the

³¹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 248, 1173. Unsigned Justice Department to The Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, 27 November, 1914.

duties of the police should remain very much as heretofore, notwithstanding the registration, except as to those who are taken in charge by the military, and the disposition which Chief Grasett avows on the part of the police to assist, I am very much in hopes there will be no trouble, for I anticipate that the Registrar will be reasonable.”(sic)

A review of correspondence between Grasett and the federal government in 1920 suggests that the remained unresolved issues. In 1920, Grasett asks that he be paid for time spent being responsible for the registration of aliens of enemy nationality in Toronto after the second Registrar was withdrawn by the Justice Department and those responsibilities being transferred to local police forces.

Grasett writes:

The Minister thought that when Mr. Snow (the second Toronto Registrar) was displaced as Registrar that the duties would automatically devolve upon the Police. Such a course required by consent and co-operation, without which the Police would not have acted, and the Government would have had to go elsewhere at very considerable expense.

I was under no obligation whatever to do this work in addition to my own, but the staff who worked under me were relieved of their ordinary duty to do Government work at the City's expense.

I could say a lot more but I won't, but I shall have the satisfaction at least of knowing that I did five years work for the Government without remuneration or even a word of thanks.

Grasett's letter was received by the Minister of Finance who forwarded it onto Justice³² ending up on Newcombe's desk for response.

In the end, the Finance Minister agreed with Doherty's decision not to pay Grasett any money while acting as the Registrar of Aliens as the registration responsibilities were something that the police should have been looking after, but suggests that because Grasett is “a very decent man” Doherty should write him to thank him for his efforts.

³² LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 248, 1173, Sir Henry Drayton to C.J. Doherty, 28 April, 1920.

Montreal's Registrar, Silas H. Carpenter (a former RNWMP member), may not have fully appreciated the direction he received about the difference between his role and that of the police. The direction was that "all necessary police duties will doubtless be attended to by the chief of the local police upon your request", however, Carpenter asked Sherwood to cover the cost of car-fares for his men when they "are investigating reports and complaints throughout the district...."³³ It appears that he anticipated using his staff in this capacity as he also asked for a budget for this type of expenditure. Of greater interest is Newcombe's response the next day agreeing to the expenditure and suggested Carpenter keep a supply of car tickets on hand.³⁴

With all registrars in place, offices and staff selected, and advertising distributed the registrars began their work.

Although the number of internees is largely settled as a result of Otter's final 1920 report, the number of those who had signed an Undertaking, also known as being paroled, has not been definitively determined. When a number has been provided it has been without a specific source.

Sources have now been found to provide us with the scale of the registration and reporting.

In response to a request from the American consuls for access to internment camps, the Justice response had attached to it a listing of the number of Undertakings signed by aliens of enemy nationality and the places which had registered them.

By February, 1915, a total of 24,147 had registered in 25 different cities across Canada.³⁵ There were 21,701 Austro-Hungarian, 2290 Germans and 156 Turks. Unfortunately numbers for Brandon, Edmonton, Fort William/Port Arthur, and Regina were not included in these totals and of the six designated registration centres included in these numbers, Montreal (10,520) had the

³³ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 200, 348, Silas H. Carpenter, Registrar to Col. Sherwood, C.M.G., M.V.O., Chief Commissioner of Police, Ottawa, 14 December, 1914.

³⁴ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 200, 348, E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice to Silas H. Carpenter, Registrar, 15 December, 1914.

³⁵ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 328.

greatest number of registrants followed by Winnipeg (6,926), Ottawa (2,023), Toronto (1,937), Calgary (1,034) and Sydney (602).

A memorandum for Sherwood, by J. Fraser, a Sergeant of the Dominion Police, advised that for the week ending 13 March, 1915 the following locations had these weekly registrations—Winnipeg (570), Edmonton (86), Port Arthur/Fort William(87), Calgary (49), Toronto (30), Montreal (61), Ottawa (42), Brandon (16) and Sydney had no returns since 16 February, 1915. Fraser added a postscript indicating that “there are practically no Internments with the exception of Montreal, where present average about 15 per day.”

Another document updating these numbers is from 1918. That summer, the Minister of Justice asked members of his department to answer a question about the effectiveness of the “existing regulations for safe guarding the public interests against enemy aliens.”³⁶

In a paper suggesting ways to improve the registration and reporting requirement for aliens of enemy nationality, Cahan provided Doherty with some statistics.

By June, 1915, 48,500 aliens of enemy nationality had been paroled and 5,088 interned.³⁷

On 1 June, 1918 a total of 79,057 aliens of enemy nationality were paroled (Austro-Hungarians—68,498, Germans—4,443, Turks and Bulgarians—6,116) and 2,087 remained interned (Austro-Hungarians—469, Germans—1,582, Turks and Bulgarians—19, Miscellaneous—17).³⁸

Where a registrar was not appointed “the Order-in-Council of August 15th, is effective, and indeed, so far as the Registrarships [*sic*] are concerned, it is not expected that they will last long doing the work assigned them at the various points, and just so soon as they have registered the

³⁶ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A2, 222, 934, C.H. Cahan to Honourable Charles J. Doherty, Minister of Justice, 14 September, 1918, 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

most part of the subjects of Enemy Nationality they will cease to operate and the Military and Police will carry on the work.”³⁹

The military’s continued involvement is evident in a report submitted by the Military District headquartered in Quebec City. This report from 20 September, 1916 indicates that to date, in their district a total of one hundred seventy-four aliens of enemy nationality were paroled and remained in the district, one hundred thirty were permitted to leave, there were sixteen who were interned, six naturalized, one died and three escaped. A total of forty-five had been paroled elsewhere and are continuing to report to them or have been permitted to leave the district.

A review of Justice Department files and other records reveal the following summarized information about each of the ten registration offices.⁴⁰

Brandon, Manitoba

Date of Designation: 19 November, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 7 December, 1914–15 April, 1915.

Registrar(s): William Bourke (some including Newcombe believed his surname was Bourque) (20 November, 1914–7 February, 1915, 30 March, 1915–15 April, 1915), Stanley Bourke, (7 February, 1915–30 March, 1915).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): one (clerk).

Number of Aliens registered: 760.

Address: Room 10, Post Office Building.

Primary Issue: The City of Brandon did not accept the transfer of the responsibility for the registration of alien enemies until the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police agreed to cover the cost of one person to be responsible for continued registration.

Cost: \$460.85 (1 April–30 September, 1915), \$595.60 (1 April–23 November, 1916).

Registration transferred to: John Esslemont, Chief of Police, Brandon.

³⁹ LAC, DND, MD5 fonds, RG24, 4513, 17-2-40, v. 1, Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Police to Colonel J.P. Landry, A.D.C., Commanding 5th Division, Quebec, P.Q., 28 November, 1914.

⁴⁰ The starting point for information is the Department of Justice’s file for each office. There are significant variations in data available for each location because there was no requirement to provide a final report to the Minister of Justice. The most detailed information about the operation of the office is found when an acting registrar is asking to be appointed the registrar or when an existing registrar is trying to justify his position in order that the office not be closed. Information is also found in different unrelated files where information about the centres’ operations were incidental to the subject of the file e.g. statistical information was found in Crime Reports about individuals where their registration number and location were included (e.g. Winnipeg, Edmonton). Information sent to the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police has not been discovered. Only information which had an identifiable source has been included.

Calgary, Alberta

Date of Designation: 30 October, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 20 November, 1914–15 August, 1915.

Registrar(s): Inspector Percival William Pennefather (4 November, 1914–31 March, 1915), Sergeant T.H. Irvine (Acting Registrar) (dates unknown).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): six – one clerk, two assistant clerks, two interpreters (one replacing one interpreter dismissed) and one translator.

Number of Aliens registered: 1,034⁴¹ (as of 19 February, 1914), 1,300⁴² (29 July, 1915).

Address: Police Court Building, City Hall.

Primary Issue: None Identified.

Cost: \$1,201.95 (1 April–30 September, 1915), \$420.00 (1 April–23 November, 1916) (need to add Pennefather's \$200 per month less \$150 advanced). Sergeant's Irvine \$20 per month hotel bill was being covered.

Registration transferred to: Alfred Cuddy, Chief Constable, City of Calgary.

Edmonton, Alberta

Date of Designation: 30 October 1914.

Dates of Operation: 10 December, 1914–15 August, 1915.

Registrar(s): Inspector George Leslie Jennings (10 December, 1914⁴³–15 August, 1915)

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): four (stenographer, German interpreter/clerk, clerk, Austro-Hungarian and Galician interpreter).

Number of Aliens registered: 707.

Address: New Civic Market Building, First Street.

Primary Issue: None identified.

Cost: \$1,369.00 (1914–15), \$1,454.95 (1 April–14 August, 1915), \$816.20 (1 April–23 November, 1916).

Registration transferred to: Chief Constable, City Police, Edmonton.

Fort William/Port Arthur

Date of Designation: 30 October, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 29 November, 1914–2 August, 1915.

Registrar(s): J.M. McGovern⁴⁴ (7 November–22 December, 1914) Arthur L. McEwen (7 January–August, 1915).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): seven (Assistant Registrar (for Fort William), Assistant Registrar/interpreter (Port Arthur), two stenographers, one interpreter/clerk).

⁴¹ *Otter Return of Prisoners of War*. Of the 1,034, 97 were Germans, 932 were Austro-Hungarians, and 5 were Turks.

⁴² LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 190,135. Telegram Sherwood to Cuddy, 29 July, 1915.

⁴³ Jennings letter to Newcombe, 5 February, 1915 advised he assumed office on 10 December, 1915. LAC, Justice Fonds, RG13, 191, 158.

⁴⁴ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 190, 31, Frances Cochrane, Minister of Railways and Canals to Judge Doherty, Minister of Justice. 4 November, 1914. Cochrane's first nominee for the registrar's position was Colonel S. W. Ray who found he would not be able to do the work.

Number of Aliens registered: 4,000.

Address: 505 ½ Victoria Avenue, Fort William; Emmerson Building, Port Arthur (main office).

Primary Issue: Two cities having two different systems requiring two registration offices.

Cost: Fort William—\$1,285.00, Port Arthur—\$1,571.76 totaling \$2,856.76 (to 31 March, 1915), \$2,896.87 (1 April–30 September, 1915).

Registration transferred to: Chief of Police City of Fort William, Chief of Police City of Port Arthur. Receipt signed by Chief of Police, Port Arthur indicates he received from A.L. McEwen, Registrar of Alien Enemies, one Registration Book, signed Undertakings, Internment slips, one copy of Proclamation, Orders in Council, Correspondence re: Registration, and blank Exeat forms, Internment forms, Undertaking forms, enveloped, Registration Cards, etc. Receipt signed by Chief Constable, Fort William, indicates he received from George Eoll, Registration Book, Correspondence, Internment slips, Undertakings, Cards, all in connection with the Registration of Aliens.

Montreal, Quebec

Date of Designation: 30 October, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 9 November, 1914–31 December, 1919.

Registrar(s): Silas H. Carpenter (1 November, 1914–10 May, 1915), C.G. Ogden (10 May, 1915–1 April, 1916), Captain J.N. Carter (Registrar appointed by Sherwood) (1 April, 1916–31 December, 1919).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): fifteen (one stenographer, four clerks, two interpreters, one janitor, seven “outside men”).

Number of Aliens registered: 10,520⁴⁵ (19 February, 1915).

Address: 153 St. Antoine Street, 237 St. Antoine Street.

Primary Issue: Too many staff for the number of aliens reporting.

Cost: \$17,370.04 (until 31 March, 1916), \$6,029.59 (1 April–30 September, 1915), \$2,829.34 (1 April–23 November, 1916), plus \$650.00 for Carpenter at rate of \$100.00 per month. Average estimated monthly expenses of \$900.00.

Registration transferred to: Captain J. N. Carter was retained in this position by the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police.

Ottawa, Ontario

Date of Designation: 30 October, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 23 November, 1914–30 April, 1915.

Registrar(s): William D. Erwin (14 November, 1914–30 April, 1915).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): six (two clerks, one interpreter, three stenographers. There was only one stenographer at any one time as those leaving were replaced).

Number of Aliens registered: 2,023⁴⁶ (19 February, 1915) 2,430⁴⁷ (29 March, 1915)

⁴⁵ *Otter Return of Prisoners of War*. Of this number 970 were Germans, 9,430 were Austro-Hungarians, and 120 were Turks.

⁴⁶ *Otter Return of Prisoners of War*. Of this number, 91 were Germans and 1,032 were Austro-Hungarians.

Address: Gill Building (corner of Bank and Wellington Streets–23 November, 1914–4 January, 1915), 270 Bank Street (4 January, 1915–30 April, 1915).

Primary Issue: None identified.

Cost: \$2,289.96 (to 31 March, 1915). Until office closing, additional expenses would have included salaries - \$415.00 (interpreter released 28 February, 1915) and rent \$75.00 totaling \$2,779.96, \$441.70 (1 April–30 September, 1915).

Registration transferred to: Sherwood.

Regina, Saskatchewan

Date of Designation: 30 October 1914.

Dates of Operation: 25 November, 1914–6 February, 1915.

Registrar(s): Inspector Thomas Sherlock Belcher (4 November, 1914⁴⁸–6 February, 1915).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): unknown.

Number of Aliens registered: 1,409. Sixty-three interned.

Address: Office in centre of city.

Primary Issue: Accommodation and cost of transportation to internment camps for POWs.

Cost: \$625.69 plus salary for Belcher, \$169.04 (1 April–30 September, 1915).

Registration transferred to: Chief of Police, City of Regina.

*Sydney, Nova Scotia*⁴⁹

Date of Designation: 30 October, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 22 November, 1914–23 April, 1915.

Registrar(s): Col. B.A. Ingraham (3 November–15 December 1914⁵⁰), Herbert W. Ingraham (15 December, 1914–19 December, 1914), Herbert C. Moseley (19 December, 1914⁵¹–30 April, 1915).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): seven (three clerks, two interpreters, one stenographer, one investigator).

Number of Aliens registered: 602⁵² (19 February, 1915).

⁴⁷ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 190, 16/15. The Registrar advised that in January, 1915 he registered–655, in February–300 and an additional 325 registered by 27 March, 1015.

⁴⁸ Appointed on this date but indicates in letter to Newcombe that he assumed duties 23 November, 1914.

⁴⁹ Order in Council P.C. 3189 passed 14 December, 1914 divided Sydney into two parts. The provisions of the 28 October, 1914 (P.C. 2721) Order in Council establishing the registration system were applicable only to that portion of Sydney which lies to the north of the line from the southern limit of the City of Sydney east and west for a distance of twenty miles. The text of the Order in Council explains this change by indicating that a local police officer, D.A. Noble was supervising the alien enemies south of Sydney, that they were largely employed and the government felt that the provisions of the 15 August, 1914 were sufficient to deal with that area. Those internees who were released and indicated that they were going to the Sydney area signed Releases which included a provision to report to a Captain D.A. Noble, Assistant Provost Marshall.

⁵⁰ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 194, 103. Letter Ingraham to Newcombe, 8 December, 1914. The Justice Minister submitted his Minister's Report to Cabinet dated 16 December, 1914 but an OC was not passed until 24 December, 1914.

⁵¹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 194, 1037, letter Moseley to Sherwood, 19 December, 1914.

Address: Victoria Park Barracks until 5 January, 1915 then 309 Charlotte Street.
Primary Issue: Staff pay and reimbursement complaints and investigations.
Cost: \$3,528.88 (to August 13, 1915).
Registration transferred to: D. McEachran, Chief Constable, Sydney, Nova Scotia only accepted these duties when the Department of Justice paid for a clerk. A.D. Gillis (clerk), the books, files, filing cards, and a small card filing cabinet were transferred at 10:15 a.m. on 23 April, 1915.

Toronto, Ontario

Date of Designation: 10 November, 1914.
Dates of Operation: 27 November, 1914–15 June, 1915.
Registrar(s): Judge Emerson Coatsworth (12 November, 1914–11 January, 1915), A.J. Russell Snow (16 January–15 June, 1915).
Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): three (two assistants and one stenographer)
Number of Aliens registered: over 3,800⁵³, 14,000+.⁵⁴
Address: 34 Adelaide Street, East.
Primary Issue: Dispute between the Registrars and Chief Constable, City of Toronto Police Department.
Cost: \$2,475.75, \$1,907.27 (1 April–30 September, 1915), \$410.00 (1 April–23 November, 1916) plus \$400.00 to Coatsworth (2 months) and \$500.00 for Snow (\$200.00 for first 2 months and \$100.00 per month for until office closed).
Registration transferred to: Chief Constable, City of Toronto Police.

Victoria, British Columbia

Date of Designation: 14 November, 1914.
Dates of Operation: 1 December, 1914–5 February, 1915.
Registrar (s): Major Ridgeway Wilson (14 November, 1914–near end January, 1915).
Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): one.
Number of Aliens registered: 334⁵⁵ (as of 19 February, 1915).
Address: Law Chambers, Bastion Street.
Primary Issue: Registrar did not like the fact that the terms of his appointment and P.C. 2721 restricted his authority over alien subjects to Victoria and 20 miles around it.⁵⁶ The Registrar wanted to enforce registration against aliens who had become

⁵² LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 191, 328. *Otter Return of Prisoners of War*, information provided to United States of America Consul's request for information, 19 February, 1915. Of this number, 13 were Germans and 589 Austro-Hungarians.

⁵³ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 248, 1173, A.J. Russell Snow, Registrar to E.L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, 1 June, 1915.

⁵⁴ Greg Marquis, *Policing Canada's Century: A History of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 107. The number provided by this source is unreferenced. A review of the Annual Reports for the Police Department of the City of Toronto from 1914-1920 do not provide any aliens of enemy nationality registration statistics.

⁵⁵ *Otter Return of Prisoners of War*. Of the 334, 114 were Germans and 220 were Austro-Hungarians.

⁵⁶ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 190, 33, Major W. Ridgeway Wilson, i/c Department of Alien Reservists to Colonel A.P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Police, Ottawa, 10 December, 1914. Prior to his appointment, Wilson was

American citizens and registering alien women who were married to Americans to British men.

Cost: \$238.40, \$100.00 (1 April–30 September, 1915).

Registration transferred to: police across British Columbia.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Date of Designation: 30 October 1914.

Dates of Operation: 3 December, 1914⁵⁷–unknown. Rent was paid from 20 November, 1914 and H.H. Crofts was paid from 25 November, 1914.

Registrar (s): Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Lindsay⁵⁸ (1 December, 1914–5 February, 1915), Henry H. Crofts, Acting Registrar (5 February, 1915–12 March, 1915), Captain J.H. Davidson (13 March, 1915–unknown).

Staff (maximum number – other than registrar): fourteen.

Number of Aliens registered: 5,541 (from 3 December, 1914–4 February, 1915) and 4,265 (from 5 February–12 March, 1915), 16,553⁵⁹ averaging 80 per week (14 April 1916).

Address: 74 Colony Street, Winnipeg.

Primary Issue: None identified.

Cost: \$12,457.11 (1915–16), \$7,796.27 (1916–17).

Registration transferred to: unknown.

The Internment Operations Office⁶⁰

Date of Designation: Director – 6 November, 1914, Internment Operations Office – 12 December, 1914.

Dates of Operation: 1 November, 1914–30 September, 1920.⁶¹

Director: Major General Sir William Otter, K.C.B., C.V.O.

Staff (maximum number): 40.

Number of Aliens interned: 8,579.

Address: Banque Nationale Building, Rideau Street, Ottawa, Rooms 4–9.

in charge of all Alien subjects throughout the Military District of British Columbia, organizing two internment camps.

⁵⁷ LAC, DND, MD10, RG 24, 4611, 2-22A, v.1, H.H. Crofts, Chief Clerk and Acting Registrar A.E. to Major General S.B. Steele, Inspector General for Western Canada, 4 February, 1914

⁵⁸ Lindsay tendered his resignation on 7 December, 1914, subject to a successor being found. LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 201, 603, Lt. Col. W.H. Lindsay, Registrar Alien Enemies to Chief Commissioner Dom. Police, Ottawa, 7 December, 1914. He was the Chief Gaoler of Manitoba and complications had arisen in his department requiring his full attention. LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 201, 603, W.H. Lindsay, Lt. Col, Registrar Alien Enemies to The Chief Commissioner Dom. Police, 7 December, 1914, 1.

⁵⁹ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 201, 603. Report Davidson to Newcombe, 14 April 1916.

⁶⁰ “This is not a Branch, technically speaking, but a separate establishment having charge of the internment camps throughout Canada...” LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 219, 303. Memorandum for Hon. Mr. Sifton, in compliance with the Prime Minister’s memo, No. 4, dated 13 February, 1918. The Prime Minister was looking at a potential re-organization of departments and branches and requested information about department branches and numbers.

⁶¹ The date of the Otter’s final report.

Primary Issue: Compliance with Prisoner of War regulations as set out in the Hague Convention, British Army Council requirements, and *Notes Verbales* complaints by the Axis countries within the context of fiscal prudence.

Cost: \$4,445,092.33 offset by \$1,219,595.71 (cost of non-Canadian POWs, refunds from other departments, sale of building) = \$3,225,496.62 plus the cost of soldiers.⁶²

Records transferred to: Custodian of Enemy Property.

After Otter's 6 November, 1914 appointment as Director of Internment Operations and the establishment of the internment operations organization (P.C. 2817), commanders of Canada's military districts received a Circular Letter dated 18 November, 1914 notifying them of their reduced responsibilities as it related to aliens of enemy nationality.⁶³ The letter stated that Major-General Sir W.D. Otter, K.C.B., C.V.O. is appointed Officer Commanding Internment Operations and a copy of the OC appointing Otter, accompanied the announcement.

At the same time as the Justice Department's package was sent to the registrars, the Adjutant General of the Canadian Militia mailed a Circular Letter dated 21 November 1914 to all commanders of Canada's military districts with respect to the new registration system.⁶⁴

The letter confirms that Sydney, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Fort William, Welland, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary and Victoria had been designated as centres for the registration of alien enemies and listed the registrar for each of those centres. Welland was indicated as not having had a registrar appointed and a registrar was never appointed.⁶⁵ Attached to this letter was Newcombe's letter to the registrars setting out their responsibilities.

⁶² Major-General Sir William Otter, *Internment Operations 1914-1920*, Thomas Mulvey: Ottawa, 1921, 15-16.

⁶³ LAC, DND, MD13 fonds, RG24, 4694, 448-14-20, v. 1, Circular Letter to The District Officer Commanding, Military District No. 13, Calgary, Alta., 18 November, 1914.

⁶⁴ LAC, DND, MD2 fonds, RG24, 4287, 34-1-26, v. 1, The Adjutant-General, Canadian Militia to the G.O.C., 2nd Division, Toronto, Ont.

⁶⁵ Despite this, evidence of registration taking place in Welland has been found in some military files. A report for higher headquarters about prisoners of war indicates that Sam Brienacitch of Divusa, Austria had a parole card from Welland indicating he was #90 while Frank Bonifacic of Punat, Austria, who was detained the same day, was #113 on a Welland parole card. The 15 August, 1914 Proclamation was the authority for these two registrations. LAC, DND, MD2 fonds, RG24, 276, 34-1-3, v.3.

Now that these two related responsibilities were transferred elsewhere, the military command's direction in this letter was that "you will be good enough to see that the military authorities in your command co-operate in harmony with the Registrars in the discharge of the somewhat difficult duties incident to the situation."

Otter also set out on a cross-country visit visiting Toronto on 20 November, 1914 and returning there one week later after concluding a visit to Western Canada.⁶⁶ There is ample evidence that Otter continued with these visits to all internment camps and stations on a regular basis throughout the First World War.

The issue of Otter's jurisdiction arose in early December, 1914 when the Officer Commanding the 5th Military Division, headquartered in Quebec, wrote Otter about destitute aliens of enemy nationality and what to do about them. In response Otter advises that "in so far as this case is concerned it is not possible for me to take any action until these men have been interned or paroled as Prisoners of War; when such is done then I am personally in a position to act and make necessary arrangements for their subsistence, quartering and clothing if necessary."

⁶⁷ By his use of the word "parole" in the above-noted phrasing, Otter may have confused matters relating to his jurisdiction.

Although the preamble of P.C. 2817 clearly states the need for someone to be appointed to look after the internment of aliens of enemy nationality as prisoners of war and then appoints Otter, questions continued throughout the war as to whether he had "any jurisdiction over Alien Enemies who sign the Undertaking called for by the Proclamation and are paroled by Registrars." Otter adds that his interpretation is that "I have nothing whatever to do with Aliens until after they have been actually Interned, and that putting them on Parole by Registrars does

⁶⁶ LAC, Justice fonds, RFG13, A2, 248, 1173, 11.

⁶⁷ LAC, DND, MD5 fonds, RG24, 4513, 17-2-40, v. 1, 1.

not constitute Internment.”(sic) Newcombe’s response, two days later, agrees with Otter’s interpretation that his jurisdiction as being “limited to those who are interned as prisoners of war. This I think is consistence with the provisions of the Order-in-Council of 6th November last.”⁶⁸

Shortly after the military districts were notified of these changes they also received a series of letters from the fledging Internment Operations Office dated 2 December, 1914.

The first letter notified them that the headquarters for internment operations was established in the Banque Nationale Building, in Ottawa and that they should forward their correspondence with respect to the internment of alien prisoners to that address.⁶⁹

A second letter asks each of the district military commanders to provide details about the current state of internment operations in their areas of responsibility. Otter needed to find out what was in place across the country.

Otter requested each military district provide him the following details:

1. Locations of Internment Station or Stations;
2. Description of Internment Station or Stations and capacity of each;
3. Cost entailed by its occupancy and necessary alterations;
4. Cost of maintenance;
5. Names of the officers in charge and their assistants;
6. Name of the officer commanding troops with number of such troops and units to which they belong also any changes in this respect from time to time;
7. SUPPLY. Description of rations issued each day and how and where obtained;
8. QUARTERS. Description of bedding and space allotted to each prisoner;
9. CLOTHING. General condition of prisoners’ private clothing;
10. Statement of clothing issued by Government; total cost same and approximate cost per suit;
11. Prisoners’ finance. Statement of monies taken from prisoners, giving names of men and amounts taken from each and how disposed of;
12. EMPLOYMENT. Facilities for the employment of prisoners and description of such if employed.⁷⁰ (sic)

⁶⁸ Ibid, Deputy Minister of Justice to Major General Sir William Otter, 18 February, 1915.

⁶⁹ LAC, DND, MD5 fonds, RG24, 4513, 17-2-40, v. 1, The Officer Commanding, Internment Operations, Ottawa to The Officer Commanding, 5th Military District, Quebec, Quebec, 2 December, 1914.

⁷⁰ LAC, DND, MD5 fonds, RG24, 4513, 17-2-40, v. 1, The Officer Commanding, Internment Operations, Ottawa to The Officer Commanding, 5th Military District, Quebec, Quebec, 2 December, 1914.

The third letter asks for a weekly “statement showing the number of prisoners at date of last return and those added during the intervening period, giving the numbers of each nationality.”⁷¹

Throughout December, 1914, district reports flowed into the Internment Operations Office. If a return was not submitted within a couple of weeks, a polite but firm reminder letter asking for the information was sent from the Internment Operations Office.

While waiting for these reports to flow into Ottawa, Otter embarked on a cross country visit of military districts while his staff worked on another document, the most critical document for internment operations in Canada. This was the standing order outlining how the internment camps were to be operated and how the POWs were to be treated. After the initial standing order was drafted, more than thirty amendments and additions have been identified.

The first standing order, dated 11 January, 1915, was sent to all Camp Commandants of internment camps and stations on 18 January, 1915. It was called *Maintenance of Discipline Among Prisoners of War*.⁷² To-date, the last amendment or addition to this first instruction is dated 10 April, 1918.

This 11 January, 1915 document was nine pages long, had seventeen different subject headings and was based on the Royal Warrant of 3 August, 1914.⁷³

The first section begins with “prisoners will comply with all rules and regulations deemed necessary for their safety, good order and discipline.” It then adds that no matter the POW’s rank, they are all “subject to the orders of all officers, guards and sentries placed over them. All

⁷¹ LAC, DND, MD13 fonds, RG24, 4694, 448-14-20, v. 1, Officer Commanding, Internment Operations, Ottawa to The Officer Commanding, Military District No. 13, Calgary, Alta., 2 December, 1914.

⁷² LAC, DND, MD2, RG24, 4280, 34-1-3, v.14.

⁷³ A Royal Warrant is a term used for an order issued by the War Office containing the most recent and important instructions for the military. Brevet Major J.M. Bannatyne, *Royal Warrants, Circulars, General Orders and Memoranda, Issued by the War Office and Horse Guards, August, 1856, to July, 1864*, Glasgow, James Maclehose, 1864.

such orders will be obeyed immediately.” Any POW guilty of disobedience is liable to be punished. Deliberate disobedience was to be dealt with “by force of arms” and any POW attempting to pass a boundary fence or wall without permission will be fired upon after being “once duly warned.” Any POWs escaping (and recaptured) or attempting to escape will see a curtailment of privileges and more serious enforcement.

The second section deals with the organization of the camps and stations indicating that, other than officers, the POWs will be divided into huts or tents. That the POWs from that hut “will select a captain who will assist the Staff in maintaining order in his company, etc., and will bring to the notice of the staff any matter bearing upon the comfort or well-being of the men, which requires attention.” (sic)

The next section grants the camp or station commandant authority to deal with a charge made against a POW for section one violations and includes the format for the charge of a violation of the rules. Of note, is that an officer commanding a body of troops who have custody of POWs in the field or enroute can also charge a POW with a section one offence for an infraction during the POW’s transit to a camp or while on a work site.

Camp routine is covered in section four and starts off with the timing for reveille. Twice daily roll calls and how they are to be done and various instructions on keeping the camps clean are also dealt with. Lights out is to be 9:30 p.m. and not more than two men at a time may visit a latrine after lights out. Visitors to the camp will only be admitted with the commandant’s written permission.

Two vices were dealt with in the next two sections. The ban on the consumption of liquor, without permission, is the subject of one section. Being drunk was a punishable offence. The

next section advised that smoking was allowed at times and places fixed by the camp commandant.

Mail and the receipt of newspapers were dealt with next. POWs were to have free postage and their mail was subject to censorship. The POWs were not allowed access to newspapers although each commandant had the discretion to decide which literature is supplied to the prisoners. POWs were also encouraged to write their letters in English to speed up the process of review. Interpreters were used to translate letters not written in English.

Property and money were the subjects of the next two-paragraph section. The camp commandants were authorized to determine how much money each POW could keep with them and everything else would be in the charge of an officer detailed to look after property and who will also maintain a POW account.

Gambling was “strictly prohibited”.

Camp punishment is covered over the next four pages. Topics included how, when and what kind of handcuffs and restraints are to be used, details about the two scales of punishment diets, and restricting the commandant’s powers of punishment to a maximum of three day of close confinement and punishment diets for up to 21 days. If a more severe punishment is determined to be in order, then a “Visitor” is empowered to investigate the situation and order punishment of close confinement of up to 14 days and punishment diets of up to 42 days. An example of a Visitor being appointed was the appointment of Colonel A.H. Morris, C.M.G., D.S.O in Halifax.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ LAC, DND, MD6, RG24, 4541, 73-1-3, The Officer Commanding Internment Operations to The Officer Commanding, M.D. No. 6, Halifax, N.S., 5 January, 1916. Otter appointed this former officer of the Imperial Service as a Visitor with full powers of a Visitor in connection with the prisoners of war under his charge with the approval of the general in charge of the 6th Division in Halifax.

On page seven the order recognizes the need to consider local conditions by stating that “the duties and discipline of the Staff and guards at internment camps and all matters connected with the safeguarding of the prisoners must vary with local conditions, but must accord with the Spirit of the King’s Regulations and the Rules of the Hague Convention as interpreted and carried out by the Camp Commandant subject to the approval of the Officer Commanding Internment Operations.”(sic) This section also indicates that POW labour will be used to maintain the camp facilities, dealt with the standard of sanitation, and established that the internment camp’s medical officer’s duties will be the same as in Militia camps. Sick POWs will be hospitalized and “cared for as if national soldiers” and the burial of deceased prisoners and disposal of their effects will be in accordance with Article 19 of the Hague Convention. Religious worship was to be exercised in accordance with Article 18 of the Hague Convention.

Work and POW payment was covered in this section – they were to be paid 25¢ per day when doing work for the State, while “work for other branches of the public service, or for private persons, the conditions are settled in agreement with the military authorities.” Their wages were to go “to improving their position, and the balance shall be paid them on their release, deduction on account of maintenance excepted.”

The final section deals with visits to POWs. Monthly visits of “not more than two relatives or friends at the same time for a period of a quarter of an hour during such hours as may be appointed for this purpose by the Commandant.”(sic) The commandant may waive these restrictions in special cases.

The conclusion of this order advised camp commandants that they were “expected to interpret and administer these regulations in a humane but firm spirit.”

As certain situations arose and/or based upon directions from the British Army Council these orders were amended on a regular basis. Within three months, the first amending order was issued. The following amendments and additions followed:

Date of Issue	Amendment	Addition
7 April, 1915	Allow British English-language newspapers, subject to Commandant censorship.	Officer and Civilian pay in question.
		Daily subsistence for POWs.
		Recreational items grants.
		Prisoner funds.
15 April, 1915		Officer Pay rates set.
4 May, 1915		Officer Pay only for those captured during naval/military operations. Other proof required. Merchant marine officer receive no pay. If uncertain, no pay, and refer to Otter.
20 July, 1915	Re: intoxicating liquor, special permission deemed to be Medical Officer permission.	
23 July, 1915		Transfer of POWs. Directing that Military Districts provide notice of the time, number of POWs and escorts prior to the transfer. Reminding them that the description and cause of arrest is being omitted.
27 July, 1915		Canteen rules established.
5 August, 1915	Commandants not to accept any POWs from arresting authorities without proper documentation being completed including signature of Interning Officer.	
3 November, 1915	Tickets used to purchase items cannot be accumulated with \$5.00 per man maximum redemption.	
17 January, 1916	Conduct sheets for POW punishment to be kept and accompany POW on move to new camp. On release to Otter.	Medical history sheet kept and move with POW if transferred.
23 March, 1916	Prisoners' Funds to be sent to Int. Ops office for trust deposit. Money can be used only with Otter approval.	
31 March, 1916		Work hours – eight hours equal full day and march to work site time is considered part of the day's labour.

		Meal hours are not included in the eight hour.
16 June, 1916	Turkish POWs restricted to one letter per week in reprisal for Turkish steps.	
30 June, 1916		Camp maintenance maximum 10% of POWs credit to work in camps. Canteen expenditure limited to 50% of earnings and no privileges if do not work. Personal effects, receipts to be given to POW, listed in detail, and list certified. Stored at original Internment Station until release.
21 July, 1916		Canteen expenditures changed to allow a rate of maximum expenditure based upon monthly earning.
14 August, 1916		Remittance to immediate family in Austro-Hungary countries of £5 per month allowed. Printed matter may only be sent to POW from dealer or publisher.
21 August, 1916		Civilian POWs of “good social standing” entitled to officer messing and accommodation.
12 September, 1916	Turkish POW letter limit cancelled.	
6 October, 1916		Camp and Station Commandants to submit Army Form W3466 of all POWs in their charge by 10 th of each month.
6 February, 1917		Disposal of certain articles sent to POWs either to be impounded (tools), destroyed (newspapers), or sent to nearest military hospital (e.g. inflammable articles, liquids, patent medicine).
10 April, 1917	POW postage entitlement. Must pay if parcel originated or sent to Canada address needs postage.	
16 May, 1917	New scale of rations effective 1 June, 1917 (e.g. bread reduced to 12 oz.	

	from 2 lbs.). If engaged in heavy manual labour ⁷⁵ add 4 oz. of bread and beef.	
24 May, 1917	Officers and first class civilian POWs \$3.00 per month to supplement messing from 1 June, 1917. Camps with women and children will received \$3.00 for females over 15 year of age and \$1.50 per child three to 15 years of age of both first and second class POWs form 1 June, 1917.	
12 June, 1917	Cheese can be substituted for meat for those engaged in heavy manual labour.	
15 June, 1917	POW Correspondence - all can send two letters per month. Postcard counts as a letter. Incoming stamps will be removed. POW not to affix stamps to letter. Letters and packages will be examined for concealment of messages. ⁷⁶	
1 August, 1917	Escape and attempt escapes maximum punishment 14 days.	
28 September, 1917	14 August, 1916 order amended by replacing “American Consulates” with “The Royal Consulate General of Sweden in Montreal”.	
8 November, 1917	Complaint of delays to deliver letters and parcels. Speed up delivery and censorship processes.	
13 November, 1917		Christmas contributions to POW canteens of \$1.00 for each man, woman and child and special issue of tickets used at canteen to be stamped with “Xmas”.
10 December, 1917		Commandants responsible for care and safety of military stores issued to guards.
3 January, 1918		All POW mail addressed to or being received from Consuls of belligerent countries to go to Internment

⁷⁵ “Heavy labour is intended to cover work outside the limits of camp such as road making, clearing or cultivating land, digging drains, cutting timber, cordwood or pulpwood, seeding or harvesting, etc. but does not include any of the ordinary routine duties of maintenance of camp and prisoner’s quarters.” LCA, DND, MD2, RG24, 4280, 34-1-2, v. 14.

⁷⁶ This is the first directive which specifically states that it was sent to Lt. Col. Ridgway Wilson in British Columbia in addition to all Commandants of Camps and Stations. LAC, DND, MD2, Rg24, 4280, 34-1-3, 2.

		Operations Office.
19 April, 1918	Correspondence to Swiss Consul can be in excess of 2 letters per week.	

Although a comprehensive review of the application of these rules is beyond the scope of this paper, several provisions of the initial orders are highlighted.

Despite their wide circulation, a review of military district correspondence indicates that the initial orders and/or the amendments were not read, were misunderstood or disregarded.

Awareness of Procedures

Mail was one of the first issues for camp commandants.

Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Stewart from the Lethbridge Internment Camp wrote the Officer Commanding Military District 13 (Colonel Ernest Alexander Cruikshank) in Calgary advising him that the officers interned at his camp wrote three or four letter per day and it was starting to cost him having to supply stamps.⁷⁷ He suggested that the prisoners pay for their own postage indicating that if the “Official” stamp is applied to this mail it would be directed to Ottawa and it would take a considerable time to go through the process. Cruikshank’s response to Stewart was that he should read the Orders he’s received as it clearly states that prisoners are entitled to two letters per week.

Mail was again the subject of a memo from Otter to all station commandants.⁷⁸ The Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police had advised Otter that POW letters from the Internment Stations have going to the Dominion Police for censorship and Otter directed that the commandants “kindly note” articles 30 to 33 E of the 11 January, 1915 standing order and comply with those instructions. Otter also added that they should endorse the outgoing letters in

⁷⁷ LAC, DND, 4694, 448-14-20, v. 2, Major J.S. Stewart, 25th Battery, C.F.A to District Officer Commanding, MD13, Calgary, Alberta, 27 March, 1915.

⁷⁸ LAC, DND, MD6 fonds, RG24, 4541, 73-1-3, Officer Commanding Internment Operations to All Commandants of Internment Stations, 23 March, 1915.

some way to indicated that they have been censored after which local Postmasters will attach the postage. He also added that they should secure the local serves of an interpreter, that POWs are not to used as interpreters, and if they cannot find one locally they should contact him.

After a review of several military districts' correspondence files it is difficult to confirm that Otter sent the districts their own copy of every Internment Operations order. No correspondence has been found which clearly states that each district received these standing orders.

For example, on 8 April 1915, Otter sent Cruikshank a copy of the 7 April, 1915 amendment. What is interesting to note is that the letter appears to be a carbon copy with "Military District No. 13 Calgary" hand written.⁷⁹ This would seem to suggest that this order was sent to every district and to save time, perhaps Internment Operations staff simply hand wrote the recipient instead of typing up a separate cover letter.

In other situations a copy of a relevant order was sent to a district addressing an issue from that district. What military records reveal is that the various military districts regularly communicated with the Internment Operations Office whether there was an issue in a particular camp (e.g. POW escapes or guard requirements) or a greater policy issue needed to be addressed (e.g. POW finances).

Forms

In addition to the operations orders internment operations and the government required additional documentation. Over a dozen different forms have been identified as part of the registration and internment process. These include the regulatory driven Undertaking (in the first several months of the war these forms appeared to have been produced locally on a Gestetner

⁷⁹ LAC, DND, 4694, 448-14-20, The Officer Commanding Internment Operations to The Officer Commanding, Military District No. 13 Calgary, 8 April, 1915.

Cyclograph device) to the “Tender for Groceries and Vegetables, &c” and the Morning Sick Parade form, # M.F.B. 292. A rubber stamp was also provided to all camps which the camp commandants or their delegates were to use to certify that the charge is a proper charge against internment operations, that the purchased item was received, the price was “fair and just” and that it had not be charged to the internment operations account before.⁸⁰

The Internment Operations Office’s determined persistence in ensuring each form was correctly completed is evident throughout various correspondence files. This need for documentation accuracy was in large part driven by the requirements of the Prisoners of War Information Bureau in London, England.

The Office’s staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel MacPherson, found himself referencing the Bureau’s requirements when writing the District Intelligence Officer for Military District No.2 stationed in Camp Borden, Ontario. This was a situation where the forms coming from Niagara-on-the-Lake, the site of an internee’s arrest, through the Military District had the internee’s surname as “Juknofskie” while the “signature written quite plainly reads: Andro Bruchoski. This you will admit is not ‘Juknofskie’ and to avoid confusion particularly with the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, London, England.”⁸¹

As late as 1917, MacPherson found himself admonishing the District Intelligence Officer in Toronto for incompleteness of the most critical form in the POW registration process—the Prisoners of War (M.F.W. 1) form. The POW’s home address was missed.⁸² The Bureau

⁸⁰ LAC, DND fonds, RG24, 4694, 448-14-20, v. 1.

⁸¹ LAC, DND, MD2, RG24, 4288, 34-1-30, v. 1, Staff Officer, Internment Operations, to Capt. A.F. Coventry, D.I.O. Military District No. 2, Camp Borden, Ontario, 26, September, 1916.

⁸² LAC, DND, MD2, RG24, 4288, 34-1-3-, v. 2, Staff Officer Internment Operations to Capt. A.F. Coventry, D.I.O. Military District No. 2, Toronto, 12 February, 1917. The M.F.W. 1 form was titled “Prisoner of War” which was to be completed for each POW immediately upon his arrival at his first place of internment. When completed this form was forwarded first to the Internment Operations Office and then onto the Prisoner of War Information Bureau in London. Part 1 of the form was completed by the Officer Commanding the Internment Camp or Station and Part 2

“insist(s) on the home address being shewn on each Form, I must ask you to kindly ascertain this important detail in full through the authorities in Niagara Falls where the prisoner is still held, and upon receipt of the information from you, we will have it filled in on the Forms here.”

In order for the British POW Information Bureau to provide the International Committee of the Red Cross accurate information about all POWs held in the United Kingdom and the Dominions, every aspect of the transfer of POWs required a paper trail.

Otter’s 5 August, 1915 Order advising Commandants not to accept POWs without the proper paperwork caused a stir in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The commander of the 6th Division in Halifax ordered the Amherst camp commandant to accept all persons ordered to be interned by agents of the Justice Department.⁸³ Unfortunately, the commandant had no such list and he was concerned that anyone could lay that claim. As a result, he forwards to the military headquarters in Halifax the 5 August, 1915 order along with the necessary form to be used.

The general commanding 6th Division then writes Sherwood complaining “that on several occasions lately, the O.C. Internment Camp Amherst, N.S. refused to take over a prisoner ordered to be interned by an Agent of the Justice Department, owing to the proper form not accompanying the prisoner.”⁸⁴ He also asked Sherwood for a list of those who were authorized to intern aliens of enemy nationality, if such a list existed.

Sherwood response included a listing of 82 names in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick who had been authorized to intern aliens of enemy nationality. This list was mostly made up of police

(the back of the form) was completed by the POW. The form contained personal information and details of the arrest and internment of the POW.

⁸³ LAC, DND, MD6 fonds, RG24, 4541, O.C. Internment Station, Amherst, N.S. to A.A.G. 6th Division, Halifax, N.S., 21 August, 1915.

⁸⁴ LAC, DND, MD6 fonds, RG24, 4541, General Officer Commanding 6th Division to Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, Ottawa, 24 August, 1915.

officers and Immigration agents with a number of Border Inspectors, and one industry representative (Dominion Steel Company – D.E. Noble). A few clerks, Guardians and two former police officers round out the list. Interesting to note that many internees released from the Kapuskasing and Petawawa camps were told to report to a D.A. Noble, Assistant Provost Marshall, Sydney, Nova Scotia as part of their reporting requirement. Noble, as the head of the police force for the Dominion Steel and Coal Company, looked after the registration of aliens of enemy nationality throughout Cape Breton County prior to the Cabinet appointment of H.C. Moseley as the Sydney registrar.⁸⁵

The Prisoners of War Information Bureau reviewed and vigilantly tracked the documents sent from Canada. A file relating to George Smokit interned in Stanley Barracks (#241) and in Kapuskasing (#74) who died 24 July, 1915 provides some insight into the passage of information to London.⁸⁶

MacPherson advises a 2nd Division officer in Toronto that when Smokit died the Internment Operations Office passed the information to London, but “in a recent letter from the Bureau a complaint is made that Form M.F.W. 1 for this deceased Prisoner, George Smokit, was never sent them and that they were in ignorance of the internment of any such Prisoner.” The Internment Operations Office never received this form and from the correspondence it appears that this man’s documents were not sent during the transition period from when the military was responsible for internment and prior to Otter’s involvement. The Officer in charge of the Niagara Falls Internment Station also admits that “previous to Jan. 1st 1915 the records here were very uncomplete which explains the careless way in which this form is filled in.”(sic)

⁸⁵ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, A-2, 194, 1037.

⁸⁶ LAC, DND, MD2 fonds, RG24, 4288, 34-1-30, v. 1, Staff Officer Internment Operations, Ottawa, Ont. To Lieutenant A.F. Coventry, A.D.I.O. 2nd Division, Toronto, Ont. 2 February, 1916. Smokit was interned at Stanley Barracks (#241) and then 23 December, 1914 transferred to Kapuskasing (#74). He died 24 July, 1915.

After a review of hundreds of internment operations Justice Department files, it is clear that of all the dozens of issues which Otter dealt with on a regular basis, responding to *Notes Verbales* and asking for more money were two important and time-consuming matters. Covering the cost of relief to the women and children of the POWs was another issue regularly appearing on Otter's desk.

Answering *Notes Verbales*

A weekly feature on Otter's desk was crafting a response to a *Note Verbale*. These diplomatic notes, primarily from the German government, were diplomatic complaints often about the treatment of their POWs.

In late April or early May, 1917, Otter responded to a German government complaint submitted to the Swiss on 28 February, 1917 on the subject of the treatment of German POWs interned in Vernon, Mara Lake and Amherst.⁸⁷ Of the dozens of *Notes Verbales* which required Otter's attention, this particular issue has been selected as the response also explains the use of diet as a penalty in Canada's internment camps. These are items number 43(b) and 43(c) in the initial Internment Operations Office's standing orders.

In response to a comment about conditions in the Amherst Camp, the report quotes the camp commandant's explanation of the use of the punishment diet,

... on October 11th (1916) eleven Civilian Prisoners of War received fourteen days No. L (1) Punishment Diet for "absolute defiance of authority and gross insubordination in refusing to carry their own bread". The men in question had been giving a great deal of trouble for some time. I desire to add that fourteen days of No. 1 Punishment diet does not mean fourteen days Bread and Water, but one day's bread and water alternating with one day's ordinary diet. (sic)

The report's last paragraph reads:

All Prisoners of War are governed by the same regulations, no matter to what Alien nationality they belong, the conduct and disposition of the individual himself being

⁸⁷ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, 213, 1052.

a factor in any permissible privileges, though it might be added that Germans are generally found to have the least regard for the observance of rules, thereby entailing a closer supervision upon their actions.

Otter also drafted responses to *Notes Verbales* on the issue of tobacco in the camps, the use of German POWs to cut wood at the Kapuskasing camp, the reciprocal exchange of British and Austro-Hungarian subjects detained in Austro-Hungary and the United Kingdom, and even the execution by POWs of deeds of mortgage and other similar legal instruments.

Cost of Internment Operations

The cost of the internment operations was a constant issue throughout the war.

The same OC appointing Otter also established that all expenditures were to be approved by Cabinet. There was no established budget and as a result, Otter was required to constantly justify his expenditures and during the First World War, submitted more than 60 funding requests.

The process was initiated by Otter forwarding the Minister of Justice a memo with his anticipated expenses for the next month or two along with a request for funds. The Minister prepares a Minister's Report recommending Cabinet approval of Otter's request along with a draft OC. Cabinet approval was the final step. Funding requests ranged from \$10,000.00 to \$200,000.00 with a majority between \$50,000.00 and \$100,000.00.

Otter's financial estimate and request dated 4 February, 1915 was for \$150,000.00. It was approved 22 February, 1915 (P.C. 388). The estimated costs were based upon 3,000 POWs and 500 soldiers with the largest expenditure being meals based upon 30¢ per day per person (\$31,500.00). The cost of clothing, utilities, travel, and transportation of escorts were also detailed. Of greatest interest for the POWs was a \$3,000.00 family support budget line based upon supporting 750 women and children for one month at \$1.00 per week per person.

Other funding requests followed the same format and process although, unfortunately, a number of the separate expenditures set out in the early requests were amalgamated. As a result, one cannot accurately determine, for example, how much money was being spent on family relief.

In April, 1919 the Minister of Justice asked “if such (expenses) cannot be materially reduced without detriment to the efficiency of the service.”⁸⁸

A few days later, Otter prepared a memo for Newcombe addressing the Minister’s cost concerns beginning his response by saying that “the greatest attention and care (has) been observed towards the most economical administration of its funds, and that every opportunity, by which a reduction in the cost of maintenance could be effected, has at once been taken advantage of.”

He then lists three ways money was saved over the course of the war years.

The first cost saving resulted from a July, 1917 reduction in the cost of POW daily food ration from 31¢ per day in 1916 to 21¢. The amalgamation of internment camps and stations from 20 in February, 1916 to three by 1919 saved money not just in overhead in his office but in cost savings from the reduction in the number of soldiers required to serve as camp guards. There were also cost savings throughout the war as a result of the continuous release of internees either to work in Canada or through repatriation of POWs to their country of origin.

Otter then highlights the 50% reduction in expenditures between the two fiscal years 1915/16 and 1916/17 when compared to the fiscal years 1917/18 and 1918/19 and notes that income in the amount of \$168,903.01 has flowed into government coffers as a result of the Internment Operations. This money came from three sources - POW private funds—\$60,313.29,

⁸⁸ LAC, Justice fonds, RG13, v. 1929, 9, Director Internment Operations to Deputy Minister of Justice, 5 April, 1919, 1.

POW wages from C.N.R—\$103,471.00 and from Barbados covering the cost of maintenance of the POWs from that colony—\$5,118.72.⁸⁹

He finalizes his report by adding that a total of \$851,741.65 should be expected from other colonies for the care of POWs transferred from their locations to Canada and of course, a refund can be claimed under the Hague conventions from the governments of Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Turkey for the care of their citizens who had been interned in Canada.⁹⁰

Support to Families of Internees

In a June, 1915 report, Otter advised Newcombe that “daily subsistence is being issued to the Wives and Children of these prisoners; some 3,500.”⁹¹ This support is confirmed when reviewing some of the financial records attached to requests for additional funding submitted to Cabinet.

For example, between 1 February and 31 March, 1915 a total of \$15,459.37 was paid by the Branch for relief to families of POWs. These relief payments were paid to various civilian relief agencies across the country at the rate of \$1.00 per week per person.

The specific line item for family relief expenditures was maintained for only a few months disappearing by the time of Otter’s June, 1915 funding request. By this time this information was amalgamated into a line item along with the cost of escorts, the movement of prisoners, wages and canteen.

When Otter’s 1920 final report to the government is reviewed, the report’s information about POW family relief is significantly different then the information from the monthly expenditures.

⁸⁹ Otter 5 April 1919, 2.

⁹⁰ Otter 5 April 1919, 3.

⁹¹ LAC, Justice fonds, 1929, 10, W.D. Otter, Major General, Commanding, Internment Operations to E.J. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, 19 June, 1915, 2.

His final report mentions that when a family's breadwinner was interned "their women and children had to be cared for"⁹² and this was accomplished in one of two ways. Either, the women and children accompanied the internee and were provided for in the camp or "by allowing families to remain at their former homes and issuing them a monthly sum for rent, food and fuel."⁹³ Otter reports that 40 women and 81 children were provided for in their own homes.

As noted earlier, POW family relief for February and March, 1915 was \$15,459.37, equivalent to 25% of all costs other than payments made to merchants for supplies.

The approved amount for those two months (nine weeks) provided support for the equivalent of 1,718 individuals. Even with some funds covering the cost of fuel for these two winter months, surely, more than the 121 women and children set out in the final report had received support.

In August, 1915, the Internment Operations Office spent a total of \$19, 978.07 for relief, escorts, moving prisoners, wages, and canteen. Using the percentage calculation of the cost of family support from earlier that year (25%), there could have been just under \$5,000.00 of support paid out for August, 1915.

Based on these two examples it appears that Otter significantly understated his support for families in his final report.

One example of how this relief support was administered is from the records about the family of Lethbridge/Banff POW # 157, W.J. Mudry.⁹⁴

Otter's correspondence indicates that when a POW asks for support for his family and a recognized individual or agency agrees to provide that support, he will reimburse that agency.

⁹² Otter final report, 6.

⁹³ Otter final report, p. 7.

⁹⁴ From the correspondence in the file it appears that Mudry was moved from the Lethbridge Camp to the Banff Camp in late July, 1915.

Somehow, the agency involved in this situation, The Associated Charities of Calgary, misunderstood what they may have been told when they initially contacted the Internment Operations Office in Ottawa. This misunderstanding generated 14 letters before this matter was resolved, including three from Otter confirming that he will reimburse the agency.

Several months later, in a case from Edmonton, Alberta where the agency was calling for the POW's release, some interesting insights into relief support and Otter's attitude towards it are revealed.

On 1 March, 1916, the Edmonton Board of Public Welfare wrote the now recently promoted, Brigadier-General Cruikshank, asking what provisions have been made for the families of interned aliens. POW John Timchuk's (Banff #476) wife and two children, aged four and one, were receiving support from their board. Cruikshank advised them to contact the Internment Operations Office in Ottawa.

Although there is no response on the file to the agency Otter's comment to Cruikshank reveals Otter's interesting insight into family relief and internment:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 2nd instant enclosing an application from Mr. E.M. Allan for the release of the Prisoner of war named in the margin (#476 John Tymczuk), now interned in Banff.

In reply I note that Mr. Allen, while stating that the prisoner is in bad health and his wife and two children in want, does not say whether the man if discharged can obtain employment, without which it is quite likely he will be back on our hands again.

Subsistence will be issued to his family if required while the man is interned, but if he is released this cannot be done, and consequently if no work is available for him he will be worse off than ever.

Conclusion

Despite no previously prepared policy, Canada partially addressed the issue of the treatment of aliens of enemy nationality within three months of the declaration of the First World War by establishing a series of registration offices and the Internment Operations Office.

Over the next several years, almost eighty thousand aliens of enemy nationality were officially registered and eight thousand five hundred and seventy-nine were interned.

As a result of a review of newly discovered documents, we find ourselves in a unique position of not only better understanding how the Canadian government planned these operations, but more importantly how the registrars and internment operations staff fulfilled their roles and responsibilities.

Despite furthering our understanding of how these two new bodies operated, a review of these documents raises new questions and new areas to investigate.

One important area which bears further research is to test how well the Internment Operations Office's standing orders comply with the "Rules of the Hague Convention," as referred to in Otter's final report. Now that the standard for the treatment of POWs is clear, additional research could review how these standing orders were interpreted and applied by camp commandants and internment camp staff and where there any consequences for their failure to meet these requirements.

The exercise of their quasi-judicial responsibilities by the registrars and police is another area calling for further analysis. An initial comparison of hundreds of police criminal investigation files with reports from some of the registrars suggests that the laws applicable to aliens of enemy nationality were not equally applied across Canada and what was the effect of this unequal application of the law.

More detailed research and analysis in these and other subjects which this new material suggests will not only increase our understanding of what happened to aliens of enemy nationality in Canada during the First World War but will also provide us with lessons for today and the future.