

# ELDERLY MEN

## FOR GUARDS NOW

### Soldiers Stationed at Internment Camps of Province Given Chance for Overseas Duty.

VICTORIA, March 18.—Lieut.-Col. Ridgway Wilson, Intelligence Officer, reports that there now are approximately 1000 enemy aliens interned in British Columbia. For their accommodation four camps have been established at different points, which are operated practically under militia regulations. The food and general regulations are the same as are applied in Canada to a barracks, although the liberty of the interns is restricted to such an extent as to prevent their making their escape.

What is termed the base camp is situated at Vernon, where are kept the majority of the German subjects apprehended in the Province after the declaration of war. Through the hands of the garrison at that point pass all the enemy aliens taken into custody. If, in the judgment of those in command, they are physically fit and otherwise suitable for work they are redistributed among the four other centres.

The latter are situated at Field, B. C., Mara Lake near Sicamous, Edgewood on the Arrow Lakes, and Fernie. Those held at these places are engaged on road and other public undertakings under guards. For the most part these are Austrians, and it is reported that they have done much towards the improvement of the thoroughfares of the Provincial Interior since they have been directly under the eyes of the authorities.

Col. Wilson explains that the question of furnishing guards for these camps has been a vexatious question. At the outset there were employed detachments from the various active militia units located nearest to the camps. From time to time, however, the men so engaged have been transferred to overseas battalions, and, although the organization of the system has been interfered with as a result, the practice of allowing men on guard to volunteer for active service has been encouraged.

Whenever a man employed on guard expresses a desire to leave for overseas service every possible facility is granted. For this reason, Col. Wilson, explains, there have been constant changes in the personnel of those stationed at the various internment camps. The situation now is that a large proportion of these comparatively small detachments is made up of men well over the age limit set for those acceptable for overseas units who are anxious to "do their bit." If a man, between 50 and 65 years of age, applies to the Intelligence Officers for some post, his physical condition is ascertained and, providing he is in good health and strong enough for the duties to which he may be assigned, his name is listed, and at the earliest opportunity, he is given a chance.

Of course the qualifications of such applicants are taken into consideration. Col. Wilson says that the employment of this method has been found to work out most satisfactorily. It has had the effect of releasing a large number of young men for overseas service and has given employment to others unable to enlist for the C. E. F. units. He asserted that there were a large number of Victoria men, as well as about 50 Vancouver men, on his lists, and that it was his intention, at an early date, to take on a number of them.