

AUSTRIAN CONSUL FEARS TROUBLE

Dark Outlook for His People Here During Next Winter

MAY MEAN DEATH TO MANY

Thousands Out of Work, No Food or Money and Cannot Leave Country—In Ter- ror of Arrest

"My main sorrow in leaving Montreal now is to think that I must leave so many Austrians in Canada to face trouble, unemployment and suffering which may, perhaps, cause death and disturbance during the coming winter," said Mr. Hans Von Hanneheim, late Austrian Consul-General to Canada, yesterday to The Gazette, on the eve of his departure for New York.

"Personally," said Mr. Hanneheim, "it is a great relief to me that I have to leave, owing to the present unfortunate conflict. But it is a very disagreeable thought to me that I must go and leave so many of our people to face such conditions. Even now, many of them are unemployed and without money, and when winter comes in a few months they must inevitably suffer very severely."

Mr. Von Hanneheim attributed the present position of the Austrians in Montreal and elsewhere to the work of some sensational afternoon papers which had been trying to stir up feeling against the Austrians here and to spread the idea that they were trying to plot against Canada because their country was at war with Great Britain.

"I am afraid the position created by such newspapers," said the departing Consul, "will lead to a good deal of antagonistic feeling. Already a large number of Austrians in Canada are out of work, and many have been dismissed. If this goes on and winter finds thousands of Austrians out of work throughout the country, and perhaps starving, it may lead to great trouble, since now there will be absolutely no one here who knows these people and can help them."

AFRAID TO ORGANIZE.

Mr. Von Hanneheim said he had tried before leaving to establish Austrian relief committees among those of his people who were better off, without success. "I could do nothing," he said, "because in this extraordinary excitement of the population no one dares move, because as soon as any of our people get together and try to do anything we are advertised as spies and denounced. Had such committees been formed it might have helped to avert what I think is a real danger, because, although we have only had a few days of war I have received alarming news in this regard. I am informed that the Dominion Iron & Coal Company intends to dismiss some 800 Austrians, the Thetford Mines have closed down, and many Austrians there have been thrown out of work, while the City Council of Montreal is said to have dismissed its Austrian employees.

"If that goes on it will mean that before long many thousands of Austrians in Canada will be turned out of their work simply because they are Austrians and war has been declared. And to make matters worse they will have no possible means of going anywhere else, because they are not allowed to leave the country, while they will have no means of earning their bread here, and no official person to look after them. This will mean a great deal of suffering during the war, and after, because even when it ends these people will have no money to enable them to go in search of employment."

Mr. Von Hanneheim said that the Canadian Government had acted very fairly all through, but until they realized what might happen, he feared there would be much hardship for his countrymen here.

MAY DIE BY HUNDREDS.

"The position is really so bad," said he, "that I am afraid before the winter is over, Austrians here may die by the hundreds for lack of food, care and attention. In many outlying places, particularly mining districts, there are hundreds of Austrians, and before their position becomes so bad as to attract public attention there is sure to be a great deal of suffering and probably many deaths. Most of the people in Canada are very kind-hearted and good, and it is only necessary to show a need of this sort for them to act, but what I fear is that the mischief will be done before it is known.

"These people," said Mr. Von Hanneheim, "are perfectly quiet, hard working people, and I am sure they will make no trouble unless they are treated in a wrong way. But at this moment they are in such a fright for fear of being taken prisoners, ill-treated and even shot as spies, as a result of what they have read in sensational papers, that they dare not do anything. It is in such circumstances that a consular official could do more of real use than anyone else, and it is for this reason that I so much regret having to leave these people to face the winter under such conditions."