

DANGER OF GERMAN RAID ON FORT ERIE IS VERY REMOTE

Stationing of a Couple Hundred Canadian Troops There Would be "Good for Business," But Fears of an "Invasion" From the States is Ridiculed

REEVE IS INCENSED AND THREATENS ACTION AGAINST AUTHOR OF "SCARE"

Hotel Proprietor Says There is Danger of a Few "Hoodlums" Landing and Setting a Number of Buildings Afire

From a Staff Reporter.

Fort Erie, Ont., Nov. 2.—The chances of an armed invasion of Canada, along the Niagara frontier, by any considerable body of Germans or German sympathizers across the river in Buffalo are so slight as to be practically none at all. Talk of fifty, ten, or even one thousand Austrian or Germans making a sudden dash across the border, at some unprotected point, and causing serious damage to life and property is utter nonsense, and only indulged in by those entirely unfamiliar with conditions and sentiments both at Fort Erie and at Buffalo. A careful investigation by The News among American and Canadian authorities, prominent citizens on both sides of the river, and in conversation with "the man on the street" has proved the fear of such an occurrence to be absolutely groundless.

True, conditions for such a raid are ideal. Fort Erie's population is placed at about 1,500, all told. To protect its bank, post office, general stores and customs office there is one constable, known, of course, as the "chief." When not on "active duty" Chief Douglas is busy in his blacksmith shop and garage. His spare time is put in as Reeve of the village.

Fear of Incendiaries.

Across the river, some 2,000 feet away, lies Buffalo, with its half-million of population, a large percentage of which is German. The number of the latter is placed at from 100,000 to 200,000. During the summer Fort Erie is crowded with summer visitors, but at present there is little or no business being done, the tiny ferry-boat rarely carrying more than a dozen or so people. Today the place is like any one of a hundred other quiet little Canadian villages, within a stone's throw, however, of one of the most cosmopolitan of American cities. Just how some of the villages feel about the "invasion" was expressed by Mr. W. E. Hunt, proprietor of the Anglo-American Hotel.

"We people here aren't afraid of a regular raid," explained Mr. Hunt, "but some of us are afraid of a visit,

some night, from 'roughnecks.' That big fire down at Tonawanda last week looks funny to us. That was incendiary. What we says is, what's to prevent a couple of those fellows over there putting out in a motor-boat some dark night, and setting fire to half a dozen houses here. Who's to stop them? None of us wants to sit up all night until the end of the war, watching out for them. Why, there isn't a soldier or guard of any sort from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake. There isn't so much as a candle to be used as a search light. What I say is, let the Government send a couple of hundred soldiers down, and we would feel a whole lot safer."

Blames a Reporter.

This view of the situation is not shared by Reeve Douglas. He is particularly incensed over the "scare" which has been created, and threatens to take active steps against the originator of it, whom he professes to know.

"It is some fresh reporter," he declared to The News, standing in front of his garage. "We who know the conditions here, know there isn't the slightest danger. It is only back country, among the farmers who don't know any better, that there is any talk of a German invasion. We are on the very best of terms with the Germans of Buffalo, many of whom have their summer-homes here in Fort Erie. The whole scare is the result of mischievous newspaper talk, which cannot but have a bad effect and stir up ill-feeling where nothing but the best good-will exists."

"Isn't it true that your Council has applied to Ottawa for military protection?" asked The News.

"We are using a Home Guard the same as every other town and city, and have sent to Ottawa to have the Guard recognized as a military organization, but we have not applied for any troops," was the Reeve's reply.

"Good for Business."

Incidentally there is a rumor current in the village to the effect that certain business men there would welcome the stationing of a hundred or so troops, at the Govern-

ment's expense. The stimulus which would be given to certain kinds of business would be very acceptable at this dull season, and there are not a few in touch with conditions who shrug their shoulders and laugh when the "German invasion" scare is mentioned and reply "Good for business."