

## Letters To Germany and Austria Under Scrutiny These Days.

Mail communications between Canada and Germany or Austria are under a ban quite as rigid as that which now blockades the transatlantic telegraph services. Emphatic orders have been issued to every postmaster in Canada to seize all mail matter directed to the countries of the enemy, and authority has been given to examine the contents and to hold the sender fully responsible for the character of the message, says The Toronto Star Weekly.

The activities at the local postoffice in sifting out forbidden correspondence have been directed mainly at the mass of mail sent by Canadians to relatives in Germany and Austria. Strange to say, the news that the countries concerned were in a state of war did not prevent hundreds of people from attempting to continue their letter-writing according to their previous customs. Every day in the week letters are sorted out of the mail bags gathered from all parts of the city, upon which the postoffice censors must pass their judgment. The procedure in the great majority of cases is to open the suspected letters and carefully scrutinize their contents. If regarded as innocent they are returned to their senders with a printed explanation of the action taken by the authorities. Some of these have been re-posted, only to meet the same barrier and the same official refusal.

On more than one occasion the mail censors have come across letters which justified a detailed examination. On such communications they have gone so far as to gather information respecting the sender, his local occupation, nationality, and character. It is stated, however, that in no instance has an arrest been found necessary. Obviously a trained German or Austrian spy would not jeopardize his budget of secret information by any such clumsy device as using the regular postoffice facilities. What reasonable information has proceeded out of Canada to date has been delivered undoubtedly by personal messengers. Rumors have persistently stated that full details of the training camp at Valcartier are remitted to the Kaiser's headquarters by way of the long distance wireless station at Sayville, L.I., and whether or not the rumor is accurate it is practically impossible to place an embargo on military intelligence which local sympathizers might like to send to German quarters.

A way out of this censorship on outgoing Canadian mail has occasionally been found by seeking the aid of friends living in the United States, who might be able to utilize the United States mail services to foreign points. This process, however, is surrounded with special difficulties, and is workable in only a very small percentage of cases.

Attempts to circumvent the Postoffice Department's censorship have betrayed not a little ingenuity. By addressing letters to points in Holland some have attempted to connect indirectly with the German postoffice system, which is in normal operation between these two countries. Even this, however, has been banned as irregular and Canadians with relatives in Holland have found their letters included in this same general order.

In normal times considerable sums of money have been remitted through the local postoffices by Galicians, Bulgarians, and other foreigners to their families back in their native countries. Before the war, this remittance money found a route through German and Austrian agencies, but with the interruption of financial relations a great proportion of the postal remittances were held back indefinitely. It is said that thousands of dollars have been deposited in the postoffice savings banks awaiting a more favorable opportunity for transference to countries of continental Europe.