

FIGHT FOR RELEASE OF GERMAN MINER

Herman Elmer of Michel Union
Interned at Vernon as
Alien Enemy

TALKED AGAINST WAR

Herman Elmer, of Michel, well known to every mine worker in Southern Alberta, is repining in Vernon jail as an alien enemy as a result of having uttered remarks at the beginning of the war to the effect that all working men should be against war. Elmer, who was secretary of Michel Miners' Union, is a German, and now the United Mine Workers are moving Heaven and earth to have him liberated. It is likely his case will come before the United Mine Workers' convention which opens here on February 15. The District Ledger, official mouthpiece of the Miners' Union in District No. 18, has this to say about the case:

Herman Elmer is a well known member of the United Miner Workers of America, and secretary of the Michel Local Union in British Columbia. Previous to the outbreak of war he was well known in the Crow's Nest Pass District for his anti-militarist views. Not anti-militarist insofar as it applies to any one country, but in the international sense. When the war broke out he realized that being of German origin did not make his situation any less delicate, and from all reports was careful in his utterances. But at one of the local union meetings he reiterated his belief that the working class of all nations should be opposed to war. In doing so he was not saying anything outrageous, and moreover, relied upon the pledge of secrecy which members of the mineworkers taken when they join the union not to reveal anything said in meeting. But some member, who had lost respect for his obligation, evidently went out and reported what Elmer had said. This was the chance which the authorities had been waiting for. Elmer was arrested and taken to Vernon jail as an alien enemy, where he has been interned ever since. The mine workers have taken the matter up with the Department of Militia, which has replied that it sees no reason to advise the release of Elmer, but that one of the officials of the department is coming west sometime and will look further into the matter then. Meanwhile the executive committee of the B. C. Federation of Labor, acting under the instructions of the convention of last week, will make representations to the government with a view to securing the release of Elmer. This is due to Elmer from the Federation in view of the fact that he was

expressing the international anti-militarist views endorsed by the Federalism since its foundation.

There seems no reason other than the general one that he is of German birth why he should be detained. No specific charge of attempting to dissuade anyone from joining the Canadian contingents, or anything definite like that is laid against him, and he should be given his liberty at least under the guarantee of the officers of the mine workers.