

## WHAT LAW GOVERNS

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Are alien residents of this country working here and participating in the benefits of American life, subject to the laws of this country or those of the country from which they came? asks the Duluth Herald.

That doesn't seem like a question that ought to detain anybody long, but apparently it has been raised and it seems not so easy to answer as the average citizen will find it offhand.

Recently an American war correspondent, a partisan of the central powers, was arrested in England. In his possession were found confidential communication from Dumba, the Austrian ambassador to this country, to his government. In these communications Dumba discussed ways and means of embarrassing American manufacturers of war munitions intended for sale to Austria's enemies, including calling of strikes, etc.

Publication of the startling contents of these letters brings from Ambassador Dumba the statement that he has a right to request, or even order, Austrians in this country to cease working for manufacturers of munitions that may be used against their countrymen. He admits that he has "subsidized" publications printed in the various tongues spoken by subjects of the polyglot Hapsburg empire to warn these people that they are violating Austrian laws, and he speaks off-handedly of calling "a peaceful walk-out" of Austro-Hungarian citizens in the large steel mills.

Discussion at Washington develops the fact that this raises a question new to American diplomacy, and officials there doubt if any American law has been violated by the Hapsburg ambassador.

Perhaps not. Nevertheless, the proceeding seems impudent enough, and though it is easy enough to understand that Austria does not like to see its subjects manufacturing arms to kill Austrians, nevertheless, there is room in this country for only one set of laws. The spectacle of the ambassador of a foreign country interfering with industry in this country on any pretext whatever, and exercising imperial though alien authority over men who are presumably citizens of the United States, is not a pleasant one.

If there is no law this proceeding violates, it might be a good idea to enact such a law immediately.

Not until we find ourselves unable to handle our own affairs will the idea of having them managed for us by an alien government become tolerable.