

FOE AGENTS SUSPECTED IN DISASTER

Military Probes Activity of
Germans in Seaport
Town

IMO HELSMAN IS HELD

HALIFAX, Dec. 14 — Belief that the collision between the French munitions steamer, Mont Blanc, and the Belgian relief ship, Imo, which caused the great disaster here last week, was due to activity of German agents, continued to grow here today, following the arrest of John Johansen, helmsman of the Imo.

Military authorities, from the first, apparently suspected that the collision was not the result of an accident. Their detention of all Germans in Halifax indicates that rumors of a German plot to destroy Canada's principal seaport are being investigated carefully. Capture of a carrier pigeon Tuesday, with a message in German tied to its leg, strengthened the belief that German spies have been active in this district.

A heavy snowstorm today again interfered seriously with the work of the relief and added to the suffering of survivors. Most of the telegraph wires were broken down by the storm, and communication with the outside world is difficult.

Collision Not Accident?

Belief that the collision which caused the fatal blast was not an accident was strengthened at the opening of the official government investigation Thursday when Capt. Lamedoc of the Mont Blanc, testified that the Imo had cut across his course as he was entering the harbor, despite his signals given while more than half a mile away from the relief boat.

Johansen was placed under arrest following statements made by a nurse who came to Halifax with the Massachusetts relief party. She said Johansen was feigning injury, and that he had attempted to bribe her to leave his room, apparently so he could escape.

In connection with the arrest, the liveliest lot of spy rumors heard here since the war broke out was spread broadcast. These culminated in a report that eight Germans had been shot at sunrise. Military and naval authorities, while acknowledging that Johansen was being investigated, declared that the other stories were absurd. Another persistent report

was that a secret code in German had been found on Johansen, and that a wireless station had been unearthed in the district destroyed by the fire after the explosion.

Searching parties continued their work among the ruins in the devastated area at Richmond Thursday. Snow and ice greatly impeded the work, but the rescuers found 21 bodies in the debris. Most of these bodies were badly charred, and only a few of them could be identified.