

COPY.

1268 db.

Confidential.

Report by Mr. J. J. Stable, Censor Staff.

on the question of the German population in Queensland.

There is no doubt that the question of the German population in Queensland has, during the past six months, developed with disquietening rapidity. This assertion is made on the following grounds:-

- (a) An increasing number of complaints on the part of British born subjects, complaints increasing in "violence" as well as in number,
- (b) An undertone of bitterness in the local correspondence, not sufficient in any one case to warrant military investigation. This "bitterness" has, of course, been evident in German correspondence since the beginning of the war; there is, however, a big difference; at first, the anger of the Germans was directed against England, now, it is almost entirely directed against Australia, the Government, the British Australian,
- (c) The newspapers are becoming more vehement in dealing with the German question, and thus increasing the difficulty.
- (d) The Government legislation with regard to Alien Enemy Companies, etc., has also been a disturbing influence and has given the naturalised German one more reason to be disloyal.
- (e) The fact that alien enemies have been given employment in State departments in place of men who have volunteered for the front is a very important factor in producing the present situation.
- (f) Lastly a number of Germans occupy prominent positions in municipal and other bodies, and this is enervating those and more the British population.

What can the present tension lead to?

A German rising is not at all likely. There is no doubt that should the Allies suffer several defeats, such centres as

AWAY

as Marburg, Engelsburg, Mundubbera, etc., might very well become dangerous. Active disloyalty does exist in the German towns and given any hope of success it would rapidly develop into armed disloyalty (in spite of the proclamation very few of the Germans have surrendered their firearms). They, the German farmers, will not move unless success is pretty certain, that is unless Great Britain is beaten to her knees.

Riots are a far more likely development in such semi-German towns as Gatton, Laidley, Maryborough, Esk, etc., are to my mind in danger at any time of more or less serious disturbances that may develop into ugly riots. The present state of public feeling is such that very little would be sufficient to start the trouble, and once these riots begin, they will spread rapidly. The British population will take "the law in its own hands", so to speak, and the German will not be slow in defending himself.

In this, I think, lies the only danger connected with the German question in Queensland. It is a danger that can be overcome, that can be eliminated absolutely, if the military authorities take the necessary steps and grant the necessary "sinews of war",

My suggestions would be as follows:-

(a) The appointment of two or three officers whose sole business would be to deal with all matters connected with the German questions in Queensland, that is-

Investigate complaints,

Act as Travelling Censors,

Visit the German centres with powers to raid, etc., if necessary.

Relieve the Headquarters' Staff of a good deal of heavy work in connection with the Alien Enemy Acts, etc.

Also investigate the antecedents of would be recruits of enemy origin (a matter of greater importance than at first apparent).

(b) Pressure to be brought to bear on the State Government to prevent the appointment of Germans to positions rendered vacant by Britishers volunteering for the front.

(c) The removal of Germans from positions in municipal bodies, J.P.s, Town Councillors, etc., if the slightest suspicion of disloyalty be attached to their name.

(3).

(d) The removal of German policemen, German railway servants, and German postal officials from Districts where the German element is found to any considerable extent.

(e) The power of "provisional" arrest of naturalised enemy aliens to be given to the State Commandant.

Under the present system several weeks elapse between the "misdeed" and the "punishment" so that the moral effect of the "punishment" is almost entirely lost. The naturalised German is, as a rule, as disloyal as the unnaturalised, more so, in fact, for he knows that he is immune from immediate arrest, and can travel from town to town without having to report to the police.

If these, or similar steps, were taken the British population of Queensland would feel that it was getting the support and protection it imagines it requires - the German, as is his nature, would be more careful and quiet and the present discontent would die down.

Above all recruiting would receive a new lease of life, as there is no doubt whatever that numbers of Queenslanders are holding back on account of the German "danger" (as they call it) in the country.

Sgd. J. J. Stable.

To Commr. of Police.

This is a copy of a confidential communication direct from Mr. Stable to myself. I would be glad if you gave same your consideration.

Confidential.

George L. Lee.

25/2/16.

Confidential.

The Commandant,
1st Military District.

I entirely agree with the views expressed by Mr. Stable.

W. G. Cahill.

Commissioner.

28/2/16.