

# SPIES IN BRUSSELS WATCH EVERY ACT DEPRESSING PEOPLE

BRUSSELS, Nov. 5.—Visitors who knew Brussels before the war and who then were struck with its vitality and the volubility of its citizens, now are amazed at the quietude of the place.

What has brought about the dumbness is, in the first place, the knowledge that every one is under constant surveillance, not only by soldiers, but by secret German agents, and that every chance word may lead to arrest and probable deportation to a concentration camp in Germany, where the mayor of Brussels, M. Max, now is located.

In the street cars, in the stores and on the streets the citizens seldom converse, even when relatives or close friends are together, and should a stranger address them, the reply is usually just plain "No," or "Yes," or "I don't know."

On the street cars a passenger will sometimes remark about a rumored military action—for rumors of all kinds are current in the city in the absence of local newspapers—at the same time expressing in a low voice his pleasure if the German troops have suffered a slight reverse. The others in the car never respond, since many of their compatriots have fallen into the trap and, after giving utterance to their opinions to the "sympathetic" stranger, have been arrested and heavily fined or imprisoned, or both.

Many men and women immediately change seats should a German soldier take a seat next to them in the car. Others get up without a word and leave the car at the next stopping place.

Dumb hostility can be observed everywhere and the Germans, notwithstanding their efforts, seem unable to gain the confidence of the Brussels people.

There appear to be as many secret German agents—some of them Belgians—as there are soldiers in Brussels. They are encountered everywhere. In the cafes it is declared they listen to every chance remark of the customers; they form into line with the Belgian applicants for passes at the official permit office; they mix with the poor people waiting for

## TWO OF GERMANS HELD IN BOMB PLOT



Above is Max Brauting and below Dr. Herbert Kienzle, both arrested in the Robert Fay conspiracy to blow up ships and railroads which carry munitions of war to the allies.

their supply of food from the relief commissions. Anything that may be said against the German authorities is certain to be overheard and reported, for the secret agents are linguists who speak French and Flemish and many of the dialects.

This constant surveillance, with the increasing poverty of the Belgian laboring classes, has a very depressing effect. Hope and conviction that at some future unknown period their country will again be free, enables them to bear patiently the discomforting presence of the German troops, but the coming winter is awaited with some trepidation. The poor, despite their habitual thrift, have almost reached the end of their resources. In consequence of the stoppage of many industries, the number of unemployed is growing rapidly and as a result savings made before the war have been in many cases exhausted.

On July 31 official figures showed that there were in the whole of Belgium 754,000 workless, including both sexes, and this number has since been added to. In Brussels and its

suburbs alone there were just over 88,000 without work, besides nearly 27,000 women and 42,000 children under 15 years of age receiving relief. Hundreds of the skilled workers have managed to leave the country to seek work elsewhere or to join the ranks of the army. Most, however, are unable to find the means to secure guides to take them over the Dutch frontier without passes, which are next to impossible to obtain.

Receipt decrees issued by the German governor-general in Brussels have made life even more difficult for the laborers, who decline to carry out work which might assist the German authorities. Prosecution and punishment are threatened for all workmen who refuse work when it is offered them, while any one who, by means of relief, sustains a workman in his refusal, also renders himself liable to severe punishment. In the last week of August the Belgian National bank was fined \$5000 because one of its clerks paid out \$500 to the order of a Belgian depositor now a refugee in Holland.

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