

Canal 'Foreign Agents' Prove To Be Refugees

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Some of 81 May Be Secret Operatives, Says War Department

The War Department said yesterday that the 81 aliens being held for deportation at the Canal Zone, who were called "foreign agents" Thursday by Secretary Stimson, are European refugees.

An Army spokesman, explaining why the department corrected Secretary Stimson's use of the term "foreign agents," told The Post that there might be some real foreign operatives among the refugees, but that the group was thought to be made up of Europeans fleeing from the havoc and persecution of the Old World.

The little group being held at the Canal Zone Immigration Station, following a Zone-wide investigation of all residents, is made up of Germans, Yugoslavs, Poles, Spaniards, Italians and Czechs, it was learned.

Report Is Clarified

Secretary Stimson, interviewed after a Cabinet meeting yesterday, was asked why the "foreign agents" of Thursday were the "refugees" of Friday. He replied:

"No, they are foreign agents. Who told you they were refugees?"

Informed that the War Department statement to the press had described the 81 as refugees, Secretary Stimson said:

"I haven't heard anything about it."

The War Department published its clarifying statement after Leopoldo Arosemena, Panama's minister of interior and acting foreign minister, said at Panama that the 81 persons held for deportation at the Zone were mostly European "refugees."

Some Given Employment

In its formal statement yesterday on the matter the War Department said:

"The 81 aliens now awaiting disposition in the Canal immigration station are part of a large number of refugees who entered the Republic of Panama several months ago, where they were permitted by the Panamanian government to remain temporarily. Some were given temporary employment in the Canal Zone. The papers of all refugees so employed have been examined and it has been found that 81 have no legal status whatever. They have been discharged and have since been held in the Canal immigration station awaiting disposition."

Meanwhile, as precautions tightened around the canal lifeline, Rear Admiral Frank H. Sadler, of the Fifteenth Naval District, confirmed reports yesterday that four destroyers had arrived at the canal for special duty.

Their task, he said, would be to keep shipping out of mined entrances, a statement constituting the first official admission that the approaches to the big cut are mined.

The admiral qualified his statement with the explanation that personnel was being trained in the laying and sweeping of mines.

The destroyers are the W. C. Wood, Abel P. Upshur, Herndon and Welles.

"Underground Railway" Seen

Detroit, Aug. 2 (AP).—Immigration officers received orders today to find out whether an "underground railway" has been operating across the Detroit River for aliens fleeing to the United States from the European war zone.

John L. Zurbrick, district immigration director, said his order was prompted by the apparent ease with which three Polish sailors, charged with deserting a ship carrying German prisoners to Quebec, crossed from Ontario to Trenton, Mich., the night of July 25.

The seamen, Michal Sochul, Alexander Turkiewicz and Karol Plonka, are being held under \$1,000 bond each on charges of illegal entry.

"These sailors got across the border so easily that they must have had help," Zurbrick said. "It looks like there might have been an underground railway operating, not only in this, but in other cases, and it has probably been built up into a profitable machine since the war."

Information on the sailors' entry and all similar cases has been furnished the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the immigration director added.

The Poles told immigration authorities they left the Sobieski, a Polish ship that had been taken over by the British, in Quebec July 14 because they "didn't want to go back to the war."