

The island is in some respects well suited for the purpose of a place of detention. The drawbacks are its small size, the area being only about 67 acres (practically somewhat reduced by the risk of prisoners attempting to escape from the northern end, and by reserves, and the very restricted area of the level land), but it has against these a decided advantage in the shape of affording a fishery for the use and recreation of those detained there. The land, though steep, is in parts fertile, so that at present enough vegetables other than potatoes are raised on the island to supply the prisoners, now numbering over 300.

An approximate estimation of the conditions and status of the prisoners exhibits the following features:—

Out of 296 prisoners interned at the commencement of the inquiry (which number has increased since) there are—Above the age of fifty, 32; between forty-five and fifty, 27. The great bulk of the population consists, therefore, of men in full vigour. Taking their own description, they are—Domiciled in New Zealand, 84; temporarily in the Dominion, 211. Taking those who may be termed “colonists,” having been more than ten years in New Zealand, we have the same figure as in the case of those who claim to be domiciled—84. There is one born in New Zealand, and therefore a British subject by birth. Of the total number, those who had arrived in New Zealand since the 4th August, 1914, when the war began, amount to 93: in addition to whom there were naval seamen made prisoner in the Pacific, 11. I have had inquiry made as to their occupations, present and past, and find that, including the above 93, there were men from various sea services numbering, exclusive of the 11 naval seamen, 138. I have very little doubt that that number is under the mark. In general the prisoners are of the working classes, excepting, at the outside, about 12 who are of superior education.

At the date of the last census those born in Germany then living in New Zealand numbered 4,015; those born in Austria-Hungary numbered 2,131. Including those detained at Motuihi and those who have been discharged, I do not think that the total number detained much exceeds 450. In this total there is included a considerable number of Austrians and other enemy subjects. Deducting these, and the sailors who were on the sea when war broke out, it would appear that out of the 4,015 Germans then in New Zealand only about 380 have been sent to places of detention by the Government of the Dominion. The rest have remained in their homes, subject only to having to register under the War Regulations. The foregoing figures are, of course, merely approximate. It must be conceded that a population such as this is pretty certain to provide a very considerable number of rough characters, and it is not surprising that at times there should have been insubordination.

At the close of the taking of evidence the former German Consul at Wellington handed me the appended table, which contains useful information as to the nationality and position of the prisoners of war:—

APPROXIMATE STATEMENT AS TO THE NATIONALITY OF INTERNED CIVILIANS AT SOMES ISLAND.

Germans ...

Receiving 10s. per month from the relief fund of the German Government, starting with 1st April, 1917 (about 141 others starting 1st January, 1918) .. .. .	163
Proposed for assistance, not passed so far .. .. .	4
	167
Possessing means .. .. . (about)	26
Without means .. .. .	77
	103
	270

Other nationalities (none of which have yet received any official assistance)

Austrians .. .. .	23
Dalmatians .. .. .	12
Bulgarians .. .. .	2
Turks .. .. .	1
Swiss .. .. .	1
Russians .. .. .	3
Dutch .. .. .	1
Mexican .. .. .	1
	44

An approximate total on Somes Island on the 20th May, 1918, of .. .. . 314