

enterprise did well, and he was able to sell coal to his homeland until the US entered into the war in 1917. He tried to get an exit visa for his family to return to Germany but was instead arrested and sent to an internment camp in Fort Douglas, Utah. The *Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper had this to write about Utah's guest:

Von Alvensleben was a typical officer of the Prussian type, highly educated, and polished in manner and with the upright carriage that denotes years of service in the army. Canadian government officials declare that they have positive information showing that German machinery was set to work before the war to make von Alvensleben governor of British Columbia.

Besides "enemy aliens" such as Alvensleben, the camp population was comprised of military and political prisoners—including members of an anarchist trade union called the Industrial Workers of the World. Alvensleben was considered one of the major troublemakers and spent much time in solitary confinement. When the war ended, he and other internees were kept incarcerated for another year and a half. When released in 1920, Alvensleben was not deported back to Germany but was instead re-united with his family in Seattle, where he went back to practising real estate and investing. In 1926 Canadian immigration rules were slackened, and Alvensleben was able to make regular trips to Vancouver to visit in-laws and conduct business. The Alvensleben home in Kerrisdale had been sold to *Vancouver Sun* newspaper owner Robert Crombie in 1929.

At the outbreak of war, the Canadian government was uncertain how to deal with its internal "enemy" population. According to the 1911 census, out of the then 7 million Canadian residents, 393,320 were of German origin and 129,103 had ties to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the first weeks of the war, the government turned a blind eye to nationals of enemy countries, as many travelled back to their homeland or re-settled in the still neutral United States. Deferring to Britain for guidance, the Canadian government eventually formulated guidelines for surveillance and internment. Ultimately, a total of 8,579 men were interned in nation-wide prison camps for as long as five years. Ironically, a few German families were ignored by the authorities and farmed at the top end of Pitt Lake, isolated away from the trials and tribulations of a world at war.



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