

INSPECTED THE FORT

A REPORT SUBMITTED BY W. H. WYLLIE.

Who Made Visit With the United States Consul, F. S. S. Johnson—Refers to the Conditions as He Found Them.

The following is a copy of the report made by W. H. Wyllie, inspector of the Children's Aid Society, on a visit he made to Fort Henry:

"On Thursday afternoon, May 27th, I had the pleasure of accompanying the American Consul, F. S. S. Johnson, on his weekly trip to Fort Henry, to inspect the conditions of the Germans who, through the unfortunate circumstances of our war, are detained behind the walls of this historic fort.

"After the usual preliminary of signing the book, etc., we were admitted and escorted to the office, where the first part of the inspection occurred.

"Mr. Johnson having a large amount of business to do with several of the prisoners, mostly of the nature of applications for their release from the fort, interviewed each individually, and as each one was told that his application had been refused, they very courteously thanked Mr. Johnson for his trouble on their behalf. Only one seemed to take it a little hard, but by his appearance he was of a rather gloomy and worried disposition. They were all asked the question if the food was satisfactory; several said it was much better than it had been. One thought he would fare much better if they had a German cook. Another, known as the shoemaker, was very anxious to impress the visitors that he was quite contented, being well treated and getting lots of good food. He would not leave until the war was over, although he got the chance.

"Several were quite anxious to hear about their trunks and personal effects, if they were being looked after for them, and several were told that their belongings were being held by their landladies until they were released and paid up the arrears for board and lodgings.

"One party was quite anxious about his auto, but his fears were soon brushed aside when he was notified that it was in the care of a trustworthy party in the States.

"There was only one complaint as regards to treatment, and upon inquiring into it and the evidence that had been taken, the visitor felt that the complainant had not behaved himself and had not been unjustly treated.

"One middle-aged man was very anxious to hear if he had been allowed to get a divorce, and when told by the American Consul that his wife had written him saying that she did not want to have any more to do with him, he expressed much satisfaction, but had only one request more to make, and that was that the American Consul get a statement to that effect for him signed by her at the City Buildings. The German who complained some time ago to the American Consul of being wounded in the chest and ill-treated was examined by him, and admitted to all present that it was all right, that he had not been ill-treated, and was greatly to blame for any trouble that had occurred. One made the request that they be allowed to spend more than \$5 per month, as last month he had run short of tobacco on the 19th of the month, and as he had spent the \$5 allowed he had to go without a smoke until the 1st of the next month. Major Dawson promised to take up the matter with the authorities.

"The kitchen and store-room was then visited. In the kitchen supper was being prepared. Irish stew was the menu for the evening meal. The best of meat was being prepared, and in a very clean and appetizing manner. There were lots of vegetables, potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc., and all were fresh, and cleanliness was the order of the kitchen in preparing the food. Fresh meat is sent daily to the fort for the German inmates. The shelves of bread which lined the store-house and the large quantity which was lying out for supper showed that there was no lack of the staff of life. Both butter and jam were served with the bread, and one of the visitors did not hesitate in helping himself to a serving of bread and jam, which certainly appealed to the palate after being exposed to the rough, cold wind that blow over the fort.

"The inmates' quarters were then visited, and the visitors were much surprised. Instead of seeing two or three large rooms with two or three tiers of bunks fitted up for the men to sleep in, they found that in no room was there more than 14 men allowed to sleep, each with a small bed for himself and a good, strong mattress in each bed, well filled with straw, and each supplied with two pairs of army blankets. Some of the men were lying reading, some were working making little souvenirs, such as photo-frames, cases, musical instruments, etc.; others were playing cards. The visitors remarked that a great deal depended upon the men themselves as to the cleanliness of their quarters, and it was much noticed that those who were employing their time in as useful a way as the circumstances provided presented the most contented and happy appearance. These quarters have to be cleaned twice a week by order. The librarian was kept busy supplying magazines and books, and made a request to the American Consul that some more be sent, French novels preferable.

"The laundry, bath-room, and toilet were then inspected, and all presented a very clean appearance. The bath-room was well heated, and had a constant supply of hot water for the use of the inmates. A young man was busily engaged in doing his week's washing, and by the experienced manner he handled the shirt he was washing and the experienced way he wrung water from the shirt showed that he had had a careful training at least in the art of being clean, and the visitor felt that even some Kingston women could take a lesson in washing from this young German.

"The writer must also add that all freedom was allowed him to question or talk with any of the prisoners he desired to talk with, without being handicapped by any of the officers.

I have tried to make this report just as the several things occurred during my three hours' visit. As far as my knowledge goes, my visit was not arranged for at the fort, as on my arrival I had to wait outside until Major Dawson arrived and allowed me to enter. I was well satisfied with the visit, and felt that everything possible is being done for the comfort of these men, who unfortunately are being deprived of a large amount of the liberty owing to the present war conditions in our Empire."