

PRISONERS OF WAR HAVE AN EASY TIME

Britain Feeds Them the Same as Her Soldiers and Permits Them to Purchase Extras

A round of visits to several of the camps in England in which prisoners of war, combatant and non-combatant, are in custody reveals that causes of complaints have now been practically all removed or will soon be, says a writer in the London Daily Chronicle. The camp at Frimley was the one chiefly concerned.

At the outset the complaint was made that the German and Austrian prisoners were being treated in a more generous fashion than Britain's own troops and recruits, and there is little doubt that this was the case for a considerable period. Now the rule is army rations and whatever the prisoners like to buy in addition.

There are some 20 of these camps all over the country, and although it was impossible to instal at once in the open spaces sanitary conveniences with up-to-date flushing arrangements, everything was done short of this to conform with hygienic requirements in this respect. The chief inspector of these camps, Sir Henry Thorahill, makes it his business to look after this and kindred matters, being assisted in his work by two senior medical officers who are continually making a circuit of the camps.

Follows Hague Agreements

The absence of soft beds for non-combatants of good position can be remedied by those with money to buy them. The prisoners are allowed to receive money from their relatives on the continent. They can write home twice a week, though all letters have to pass the censor, together with all other letters which leave the country.

Britain is adhering to the terms of The Hague Convention No. 4 of the Conference of 1907 regarding the treatment of prisoners of war. All their personal belongings of a non-military character remain their own. They are freely using the privilege of sending and receiving letters and parcels post free, and presents are admitted duty free. Ample arrangements have been made for the prisoners to worship and attend religious services according to creed.

Article XVII. of Convention 4 says that officers taken prisoners shall receive the same rate of pay as officers of corresponding rank in the country where they are detained, the amount to be ultimately refunded by their own Government. Accordingly, as soon as the British Government learns that officer captives in Germany are receiving full pay, the German officers in England will be given the same. Pending a communication on this point, through a neutral intermediary, the officers in England are receiving half-pay.

Luxuries Can be Bought

The daily rations are: Meat, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound; white bread, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds; vegetables (potatoes, carrots and so on), 8 ounces; butter, 1 ounce; tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce; and the usual condiments. They can supplement this from the canteen with fruit, biscuits, jam, and groceries. Tobacco and cigarettes can also be bought, and the commandant sees that the price is a fair one.

The men, just like recruits, have to provide their own cooks for each mess, which is given the proper utensils, while each man is provided with knife and fork, spoon, and mug. Payment of \$1.25 to \$1.75 a week is made to those selected to do the cooking or the other work of the camp.

Two army blankets per man is the rule, but owing to the national shortage in these articles there has been a delay in some cases in providing a second blanket; this will be remedied before long.

For those actually in need of new clothes the Government have supplied a suit of serviceable cloth and a full rig out of warm underclothing, together with a brush and comb and towels. In the camps under cover there are shower-baths and hot water, and every man must have a bath once a week at least.

Maintaining Discipline

There is a dispensary, at which the prisoners can buy simple remedies. Each camp has a hospital in charge of army doctors, and an isolation ward for infectious cases. German and Austrian books are available for those who desire them.

As for discipline, the camps are ruled under the authority of the War Office—practically martial law. The commandant can inflict such light penalties as stopping letters or books for trivial offences, while a court-martial of three officers meet to investigate any serious charges.

Steps are being taken to give those who can afford to pay separate quarters and servants to do their domestic work.

The great problem is the difficulty of finding thousands of men useful occupation without competing with British labor. Several utilitarian suggestions have been made which are impracticable owing to the necessity of keeping the prisoners under guard.