

GERMAN TREATMENT OF WAR PRISONERS

Germany Answers Questions Submitted By British Foreign Secretary Through U.S. Ambassador in Berlin.

Details Are Given As To the Lodging of the Prisoners, Their Fare, Pay and Hospital Treatment---The Prisoners Are Apparently Well Treated.

Ottawa, Sept. 3.—There has been received in Ottawa from the Colonial Office, London, a despatch respecting the treatment of prisoners of war in Germany, which is of special interest for many Canadians. It appears from the despatch in question, that in January, 1915, Sir Edward Grey, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, transmitted to the United States Ambassador in London, a list of questions relating to the treatment of officers and other ranks in His Majesty's forces now held as prisoners of war in Germany, to which the United States Ambassador in London was requested to endeavor to obtain answers through the kind offices of the United States Ambassador in Berlin.

The answers to the questions submitted by the British Government, were as follows:

Lodgings Of Prisoners.

The prisoners are lodged partly in buildings which already existed, partly in newly-erected huts, in rare cases in double-fly tents adapted to winter use. All rooms, including the tents can be heated. The cost of heating and lighting is borne by the military authorities.

Each prisoner receives a pallasie, and, according to the season and local climate, 1 to 3 woolen blankets. Officers have bedsteads, as well as some of the men.

Officers and officials of officer-rank have to pay for their clothing out of their money-allowance. All other prisoners of war retain their uniform, which, in case of need, is replaced by items of uniform drawn from stocks of booty. Where this does not suffice, prisoners are supplied with the necessary clothes from other sources. These consist of a jacket, neck-tie, trousers and cap. Besides these, shirts, stockings, pants and boots or shoes are provided. Prisoners of war who wear civilian clothes are fitted out accordingly. If the prisoner does not possess overcoats these are provided, or blankets in their stead.

Each prisoner is allowed to write one post card a week and two letters a month with a lead pencil. The length of the letter must not exceed six pages of ordinary letter-paper, in the case of officers; four pages in case of men. The use of pens or pens or pointed instruments and of ink is prohibited, because a large number of cases have proved where by their means communications have been made or received which has escaped the inspection. No limitations are placed on the receipt of letters. All letters despatched can be written in English, these as well as letters arriving pass through censor's office (Prüfungsstells). Prisoners' letters are forwarded as quickly as the work of censoring permits. Particular consideration is shown in this respect, to cases of urgent private affairs.

Money And Presents.

Prisoners may have money sent to them unrestrictedly but are not allowed to keep large sums in their possession. These must be given to the Commandant for safe-keeping in the Camp Treasury, or, if the prisoner wishes it, in a bank; a receipt is given in return. The money is then paid out in instalments as needed.

Prisoners may receive presents, provided that they do not consist of

things unsuitable for delivery to prisoners of war, or of objects of luxury, or of alcoholic drink. The following, for instance, tobacco, chocolate, sardines, marmalade, etc., may be sent to them from home. Food may also be sent to them from places in Germany, with a few exceptions, such as bread, chocolate, etc.

Provision is made for services of the various religious denominations.

Wounded and sick prisoners receive the same treatment as wounded and sick German soldiers.

Convalescents remain in the care of the hospital till they can be transferred to the Camp.

Each camp has a canteen where objects of common use, plain provisions, tobacco can be had at fixed moderate prices.

Regarding Pay.

Concerning the scale of pay, special proposals have been made to the British and other enemy State. It is required that out of this sum a sufficient and nourishing and as far as possible varied fare should be provided at a price leaving them enough to suffice for small daily needs, such as washing, etc. No provision for lodging need be made by officers out of their pay. Wine and beer are allowed within moderate limits.

Men below the rank of officers are employed, in accordance with the principles of Article 6 of the Hague Convention (regulations for war on land), and receive from the wages they have earned a part varying with their services. When working for the State, they receive, at the lowest, the same amount as German soldiers receive as supplementary pay for work; usually more.

The Meals Supplied.

Prisoners receive the same bread allowance as German troops in billets.

Three meals a day are given, namely in the morning; coffee, tea or soup, at midday, an ample meal of meat and vegetables. The meat may be replaced by a correspondingly larger allowance of fish; in the evening a substantial and ample meal.

In all circumstances, the daily fare must be calculated on a basis to suffice for the prisoner's proper nourishment. The Commandants who are responsible for seeing this requirement fulfilled, are, therefore, authorized to increase according to need the meat or vegetable factors, and are thus enabled to proportionate the food to the modes of life of the different nationalities.

The feeding of the prisoners is regularly and carefully supervised with the co-operation of medical officers. Care is taken that the fare is not monotonous. As the result of the new subsistence regulations and of the system, now introduced for the most part, of letting the prisoners manage things for themselves, their living may be materially improved.

At the canteens the men can buy, at fixed low prices a variety of provisions, objects of personal use, etc. The sending of articles of food to the prisoners from homes as well as from places in Germany is permitted; likewise the sending of tobacco, cigars, etc. (vide, No 5.)

Officers and men of the medical corps are attached for professional work in the prisoners' camps and in hospitals which contain prisoners.