

# Prisoners' Terrible Fate, Even Women Attacked Them

## French Government Report Charges Germany With Mistreating Prisoners in Most Brutal Fashion.

Canadian Press Despatch.

Paris, Oct. 26 (Correspondence).—

The case of the French Government against Germany in regard to the alleged mistreatment of French prisoners of war is set out in detail in a volume of one hundred pages which has just been issued, and which will be distributed abroad. The book sums up reports of the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, of delegates from the International Red Cross Society who visited German prison camps, of doctors and nurses who were interned in these camps, and of testimony given under oath by crippled soldiers who have returned to France. The volume includes photographs received from private sources, and sketches from German illustrated papers.

The French Government contends that the following accusations have been proved: Theft from French prisoners; killing of wounded prisoners; execution without formality of civilians arrested on the pretext of sniping; transportation of prisoners in foul cattle cars with healthy, sick and wounded crowded together indiscriminately, without food or medicine; insults and violence to prisoners by German soldiers on their arrival in Germany; attacks upon French prisoners by women at Erfurt with knives, sickles, and scythes, tolerated by the escort; spitting upon and whipping of prisoners by civilians; and kicking of prisoners by young German recruits as they filed through Torgau; great ravages in nearly all prison camps by tuberculosis developed by neglect of most elementary hygienic precautions; spread of typhus among British and French prisoners by mixing them with infected Russians; general prevalence of rheumatism in all prison camps as the result of dampness; enforced labor of prisoners of war on military works, such as trench digging, manufacture of arms and munitions; insufficient food, shelter, and clothing.

Photographs of German camps are offered to show the prisoners in mid-winter with only tents or dugouts for shelter. It is charged that during the first winter in Germany large numbers of prisoners were obliged to dig themselves into the ground for shelter, or to construct mud huts, and the Spanish Ambassador is quoted in support of this accusation. It

is admitted that some improvements on these conditions have been made in certain camps.

In regard to the question of nourishment, French surgeons and nurses who have returned to France after periods of captivity in Germany, report that the insufficiency of food, coupled with other privations, has resulted in the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases, such as erysipelas, scarletina, and gastritis. The latter sicknesses are reported to be very frequent in the camps of interned civilians, and particularly among children.

Crippled soldiers returning to France from the camps of Langensalza, Cassel-Viederwehren, and Wittenberg, report that Russian prisoners, carrying typhus contagion, were scattered through these camps, starting an epidemic.

They accuse the German doctors of brutality to nurses as well as neglect of typhus patients. Men who died of the disease during the night were said to have been left lying among the other prisoners until morning.

"During the painful epoch of the epidemic," the Spanish Ambassador is quoted as reporting, "everything was lacking, including beds and medicine."

At Wittenberg, according to the sworn testimony of the returned soldiers, the German authorities abandoned the typhus-stricken camp to its own resources, which were nil. All communication was cut off from the exterior. A narrow gauge railroad was used to shove into the camp the prisoners' rations and coffins. Two thousand French soldiers are stated to have died of typhus at Cassel.

The section of the book which deals with the enforced labor of the prisoners of war charges that 1,500 French prisoners were forced to work in the Krupp works at Essen. Several thousand, it is also asserted, were sent to Courland Province, in Russia, where they were employed in building strategic railroads. In some munitions factories Frenchmen were compelled to work, it is alleged, from four o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening.

The book concludes with a declaration by the French Government that it has not resorted, nor will it resort, to measures of reprisal. The only modifications in the treatment of German prisoners as the result of these charges are, the book says, the reduction of rations and pay to the equivalent of the German rations and pay and the withholding of the privilege of liberty on parole, in reple to the same measure applied in Germany.