

War Prisoners Appeal to Ontario Churches for Aid

Cruel Conditions Call for Relief—"Men Die Regularly of Hunger," Says Serbian Colonel—Subscriptions are Asked That Bread May Be Sent to German Prison Camps.

Considerable interest is being taken in the appeal which is being made by the Prisoners of War Society to the various churches of Ontario and the general public.

According to a circular recently issued by the society there are at present more than a million and a half allied prisoners of war in German hands. From many sources of information it has been established that the prison fare of the vast majority is barely sufficient in amount or quality to keep them alive.

A Serbian colonel interned at the German camp of Mauthausen states:

"The men die regularly of hunger. In the morning they receive some kind of hot water mixed with coffee or tea quite unfit to drink; at mid-day and in the evening they have soup made of the peelings of potatoes and other vegetables; these are mixed with roots and leaves so that it is impossible to tell exactly what it is composed of. There is meat only once a week—a mere mouthful. We often saw them searching the refuse heaps for bones or scraps of food; they just rubbed the bones a little before beginning to gnaw them."

Another Serbian lieutenant writes of conditions in Austria. His statement is that:

"At the Austrian internment camp of Heinrichsgrun the greatest distress prevailed. When you enter the barracks you ask yourself if these are men or phantoms. The food for officers and men is indescribably bad. The men are fed on boiled seeds which look just like food for pigs; the bread is impossible, being made of a mixture of chestnuts, maize, straw, and the peelings of potatoes. Neither officers nor men have overcoats for winter, and nothing like a hospital exists in the camp."

It is for the purpose of alleviating this condition that the Prisoners of War Society is appealing for money at this particular time. Officials of the organization have received authentic information that bread when sent to prisoners reaches its destination. They also state that in supplying bread to prisoners their action does not conflict with the recent regulations respecting the sending of general parcels to prisoners.

Those wishing to send single or monthly subscriptions for alleviating the suffering of the allied prisoners can do so by sending direct to the treasurer, Mr. Hugh Fletcher, 532 Huron street, Toronto.

The money contributed especially for Canadian prisoners will be paid over to the Toronto branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society.