

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

AND

THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR

RESPECTING THE

TREATMENT OF GERMAN PRISONERS OF
WAR AND INTERNED CIVILIANS IN
THE UNITED KINGDOM.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
March 1915.*

LONDON :

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
BY HARRISON AND SONS, 45-47, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.,
PRINTERS IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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T. FISHER UNWIN, LONDON, W.C.

1915.

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Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the
United States Ambassador respecting the Treatment of
German Prisoners of War and Interned Civilians in
the United Kingdom.

No. 1.

Mr. Page to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received November 17.)

Sir, *American Embassy, London, November 16, 1914.*
WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of German prisoners of war in England, I have the honour to acquaint you with the contents of a telegram I have just received from the Ambassador at Berlin making enquiries as to the treatment accorded to them, as follows :—

“ Foreign Office desires full information how German officers, officials, and soldiers, according to rank, imprisoned in England, are paid, cared for, housed, and clothed.”

I have, &c.

WALTER HINES PAGE.

No. 2.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Page.

Your Excellency, *Foreign Office, December 2, 1914.*
WITH reference to your Excellency's note of the 16th ultimo, forwarding a request from the German Government for information regarding the pay and treatment of German prisoners of war in this country, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that officers, both military and naval, are given half the pay of the corresponding ranks of infantry in the British army. In certain cases the amount of pay in the British army varies with the length of service in that rank, and in such cases the lowest rate of pay is issued. Officers are messes free and are allowed to purchase such liquors as they may wish, but they are expected to clothe themselves, and this is the only expense they are called on to meet. Medical attendance is provided, and all medicines are issued free.

If His Majesty's Government can learn that British officers in German hands receive the full pay of corresponding ranks in the German army, they are prepared to do the same as regards German officers interned in this country; but those officers will then be required to pay for their food. I have the honour to remind your Excellency, in this connection, that no reply has yet been received from the German Government to the note from this Department of the 24th September last,* explaining the interpretation which His Majesty's Government proposed to place on article 17 of the annex to The Hague Convention of 1907, which deals with the pay of officer prisoners of war.

1. The accommodation provided for officers is entirely apart from soldiers, and is either in country houses or officers' quarters in barracks. Their quarters are comfortably furnished but without luxury. Servants are found for officers from among the prisoners of war.

2. Officials.—In certain cases officials are interned in officers' camps; they live under the same conditions as officers, but receive no pay.

3. Soldiers receive free rations, clothing, and medical attendance, also working pay at English rates when employed. They are housed partly in barracks and other buildings, which are well heated and lighted. Some are still in tents, but these will

* This note will be included in a subsequent White Paper which will be issued in due course.

be moved to cover within the next few days. Canteens are provided, where tobacco, fruit, and other minor luxuries can be purchased. Prices, which are fixed by the commandants, are on the same scale as that charged to British soldiers.

I should explain to your Excellency that this report is forwarded in anticipation of fuller reports on the treatment of military and civilian prisoners of war in this country.

I have, &c.
E. GREY.

No. 3.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Page.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, December 14, 1914.

WITH reference to the interview which Mr. Chandler Anderson had with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the 25th ultimo, respecting the treatment of German prisoners of war interned in this country, I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency a memorandum dealing with the points raised by the Secretary of State's Department at Washington both as regards military and civilian prisoners.

This memorandum, together with the information as to officers given in my letter of the 2nd instant, will, it is hoped, provide all the information which your Excellency would desire to transmit for the information of the German Government. Should it appear to your Excellency to need amplification in any particular, I should be glad to have a further statement prepared.

With regard to the funds in the possession of the Embassy to be used on behalf of German prisoners, the Army Council view with favour the proposal to form a committee of prisoners in each place of detention to co-operate with American officials for the distribution and employment of these funds.

I should be glad to be informed of the further steps which your Excellency would desire this Department or the War Office to take in the matter.

I have, &c.
E. GREY.

Enclosure in No. 3.

*Memorandum on the Treatment of Interned Civilians and of Prisoners of War
in the United Kingdom.*

1. *Housing*.—Some are lodged on board ship, some in barracks, some in large buildings which have been taken over for the purpose, and some in huts which have been constructed. These are all warm and well lighted.

Interned civilians have been given the opportunity to elect for better accommodation and food at their own expense. Those who do not avail themselves of this are divided into social classes in the various places of internment. They all receive the same accommodation and food, but can consort with those of their own class.

2. *Rations*.—The rations issued are the same as to the German military and naval prisoners, and are issued free. They consist of:—

- Bread, 1 lb. 8 oz., or biscuits, 1 lb.
- Meat, fresh or frozen, 8 oz., or pressed, 4 oz.
- Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., or coffee, 1 oz.
- Salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.
- Sugar, 2 oz.
- Condensed milk, $\frac{1}{20}$ tin (1 lb.).
- Fresh vegetables, 8 oz.
- Pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.
- 2 oz. cheese to be allowed as an alternative for 1 oz. butter or margarine.
- 2 oz. of pear, beans, lentils, or rice.

3. Canteens are provided for the purchase of tobacco, small luxuries, and other things which the prisoners may need.

4. *Sanitary conditions.*—Sanitary arrangements of necessity differ in each camp. They are under the control of the medical officer in charge, and he is in frequent touch with the local medical officer of health. Two officers, experts in sanitation, constantly visit the various camps with a view to making the conditions as nearly perfect as possible. That these efforts are being successful is evident by the fact that the number of deaths from natural causes up to the beginning of December in all places of internment have amounted to five, namely, one from valvular heart disease, two from aneurism of aorta, one from dropsy, one from typhoid (contracted before arrival in camp).

A resident medical officer forms part of the staff of each place of internment, and in each is a hospital where minor cases of sickness can be dealt with. More serious cases are removed to local hospitals, and in some cases to the German hospital in London.

Soldier and sailor prisoners of war who require hospital treatment are admitted to military hospitals and treated in precisely the same way as British soldiers and sailors. Officers are in officers' wards.

5. *Occupation.*—Everything possible is done to provide the prisoners with recreation, mental and bodily, and in each place of internment a committee is formed from among the prisoners (whether soldiers or civilians) to organise amusements and to frame suggestions for occupation, either intellectual or athletic. In this the military authorities are aided by philanthropic individuals and bodies. In certain cases prisoners, both soldiers and civilians, have been employed in making roads, building huts for themselves, levelling and clearing ground. Civilians are employed on such work only if they volunteer for it, but should they so volunteer they are paid at the same rate as is given to soldiers, namely, that which is paid to our own soldiers in this country for similar work.

All prisoners do their own cooking, and generally look to the cleanliness and good order of their camps. Books are supplied in each place of internment.

6. *Clothing.*—An ample supply of first-class clothing, including overcoats, boots, shirts, and underclothing, as well as towels, soap, &c., is kept in each camp, and is supplied to those who may have need of it free of charge. Several cases have been brought to notice where aliens have gambled away the garments given to them, and have accordingly suffered from want of clothing until this has been supplied for a second time.

7. *Money.*—Any money found on a prisoner on internment above a small sum (say, 1*l.*) is taken in charge by the camp commandant and a receipt is given to the man, who can then draw on the balance in the commandant's hands at such times and in such amounts as he may require and the commandant may think advisable. Similarly, money sent to a prisoner is, if in large amounts, taken in charge by the commandant, a receipt is given to the man, and he may obtain this money under the same conditions as money taken from him on internment. For any sum of money paid to or received from either side a receipt is always given. Within these restrictions the amount which a prisoner may receive is unlimited.

8. *Gifts,* whether sent from a neutral country or received from other sources, are permitted, subject only to inspection by the camp staff before delivery to the recipient.

9. *Correspondence.*—Every interned prisoner is permitted to write two letters a week, each consisting of two pages of ordinary writing paper, ruled. No writing is allowed between the lines. These are despatched twice a week, after being censored. In special cases, where a man can show need for it, the number and length of his letters is unlimited. There is no limitation to the number of letters which a man may receive. Letters from or to prisoners may be written in either German or English, but when in German there is greater delay in censorship.

10. *Washing.*—Arrangements are made in each place of internment for the washing of clothes, which is done by the individual, and of the person. In most cases hot-water shower-baths are provided, and it is hoped that these will soon be established everywhere.

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