Talk of Rice Nauseates After Diet in Jap Camp

Delhi, Oct. 16 (Special).—"I never want to see or eat rice again as long as I live, in fact I don't even like the sound of the word," was the assertion of CSM Frank Ebdon, 44, who has returned to his home in Delhi after undergoing 45 months of privation and ill treatment as a prisoner of war in Japan.

A member of the Royal Rifles of Canada, CSM. Ebdon was taken prisoner at Hong Kong on Christmas Day, 1941, a few hours after being severely wounded in the defense of Stanley Village. In the morning of that day CSM. Ebdon was shot by a Japanese machine gunner, suffering a severe wound on his chin when a bullet ripped through his lower jaw, three other bullets entering his upper arm.

CSM. Ebdon's aversion to rice is easily understood after listening to his description of the food which was issued to him. When he was taken prisoner he weighed 125 pounds, but when he was liberated he weighed only 98.

Rice and More Rice

"For breakfast we were given a cup of rice and sometimes a cup of tea," he related. "For lunch we got another cup of rice and sometimes a little watery soup, and for supper we got another cup of rice and sometimes a little bit of cooked vegetable. Rice was our main food daily all the time we were prisoners, and it got to the point where we detested the sight and taste of it, but we had to eat it to keep alive."

CSM. Ebdon was in hospital when Hong Kong surrendered. The Japanese took over the hospital in February and the 2,000 patients were moved out. Regardless of his injuries, every man who could do so was forced to walk three miles to Shamshuipou Camp in the wettest kind of weather. All CSM. Ebdon had to wear was a kimona, a pair of slacks and a pair of shoes. Two days later they were moved back to North Point Interment Camp on the island. They were then put to work levelling an airfield, being required to get up at 4:30 a.m. They left the camp at 6:30 and worked all day, not returning to the camp until after dark at 7:30 p.m. Each day a certain number of men were required to turn out for work and the quota was always met, though some of the men were so ill they could hardly stand up.

Pay Raise Ineffective

Transferred with 600 Canadians to Fukuoka Camp No. 8 on Kyoshu Island, CSM. Ebdon was forced to work in the coal mines, being required to get a certain quota out daily and remaining underground until this was done, sometimes 12 to 14 hours. Each man was paid 10 sen a day for the first four months, an equivalent of four cents a day. Then with a burst of generosity their pay was doubled, the paper money issued to them being of no value when they were freed, except as souvenirs.

C.S.M. Ebdon described his worst experience as followsz

"From the Korean natives in the mines we learned that the Yanks were coming and we started to organize for a break from the camp. From a Korean we obtained an old atlas and a group of us were studying a map of Japan when caught by a sentry. We were taken before the commandant but every man claimed that we had only been studying a map of Europe to try and figure out something about the German-Russian line.

Pounded by Guards

"The more we stuck to our story the more we were pounded by the guards. Finally we were taken to a detention room and forced to stand there for 36 hours facing the wall. If any of the men fell down or fainted the guards beat them with bamboo sticks until they got back on their feet.

"We were again taken before the commandant to be interviewed regarding the atlas, but everyone refused to admit that they had been studying the map of Japan. That meant further beatings by the guards and a return to the detention room for another 12 hours, being allowed to sit for one hour out of every three.

"We never heard anything about the atomic bombs, nor did any of the Japanese in the camp," said CSM. Ebdon. "I don't know what they would have done had they known of the damage caused by the atomic bombs because they were terrified any time a B-29 bomber went over."

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149
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