Hong Kong Canadians Reported Poorly Fed

Return Tabled in Commons for T. L. Church Also States Medical Services 'Inadequate'

Ottawa, April 29 (CP). — About 2,000 Canadians, members of the armed forces and civilians, are interned at Hong Kong and Kowloon, and another seventy civilians apparently are interned in Japan proper, said a return tabled in the House of Commons today for T. L. Church (Con., Toronto-Broadview).

The return said that the food situation at Hong Kong and Kowloon is "unsatisfactory," and that medical services and hospitalization there are "inadequate," on the basis of reports received by the Government.

Staple diet of the prisoners and internees at Hong Kong and Kowloon was said to be "soup and rice."

"It is reported that some additional food supplies can be purchased by prisoners and internees, but no information as to the amount or kinds is as yet available," the return said.

Engaged in Camp Work.

Information available indicated that those interned in Japan are being employed on work only in connection with maintaining camps, the return said.

The Government had been in touch with the International Red Cross Committee, which had instructed its delegate in Japan to do everything possible to obtain information about Canadians and assist them.

The Red Cross had transmitted a report on internment camp conditions in Shanghai, and had also transmitted some communications concerning Canadians in Japan and Shanghai. The Canadian Red Cross was making arrangements to transmit necessities to Canadians in Hong Kong as soon as this is possible, but the arrangements had not been completed.

Text of Statement.

Following is the text of the return (600):

The Canadian Government have been in frequent touch with the International Red Cross Committee at Geneva which have instructed their delegate in Japan to do everything possible to secure information about Canadians, and, whether civilians or combatants, to assist Canadians in Japanese hands. The committee has already transmitted a report on conditions in an internment camp for civilians in Japan and has transmitted some communications concerning Canadians in Japan and Shanghai, where the Japanese Government is in control.

Up to the present the International Red Cross delegate in Japan has not been able to transmit any communications to or to receive information about Canadian nationals, whether prisoners of war, interned civilians, or others, in territories such as Hong Kong where the Japanese military authorities are in control.

Both the delegate of the International Red Cross Committee and the representative of the protecting Power for Canadian interests in Japan have transmitted lists of Canadian nationals interned there. Next-of-kin of all persons on these lists have been informed and the list was published in the press several weeks ago.

The Canadian Red Cross Society has already provided food parcels for British and Canadian prisoners-of-war in Germany. Arrangements are being made to extend this service to Hong Kong, and also to provide clothing, medical supplies and other necessities for prisoners-of-war and civilian internees in the Hong Kong area, as soon as it may become possible to send them forward. These arrangements involve correspondence between the various Governments and national Red Cross Societies concerned, and negotiations through the protecting Power and International Red Cross Committee. As they have not yet been completed, it is not thought advisable that information about them should be made public at this stage.

So far as is known there are no Canadian Prisoners-of-war in Japan. There appear to be about seventy Canadian civilians interned there, but they are not classed at prisoners-of-war. Information so far received appears to indicate that the interned civilians are being employed only on work in connection with the maintenance of the camps.

No official reports have been received about Canadian prisoners-of-war in Hong Kong. The Minister of National Defense has given to Parliament statistics of the members of the Canadian forces who were in Hong Kong before the Japanese invasion and of a report which had been received on the number of casualties. Information received from diverse sources appears to indicate that there are about 2,000 Canadians, including members of the armed forces and civilians, interned in Hong Kong and Kowloon by the Japanese.

It does not appear that any of the Canadians detained by the Japanese in Hong Kong and Kowloon are being employed by the Japanese, although it may be assumed that they are doing work about their camps. No definite information is available on medical services and hospitalization, although reports received from various sources would indicate that medical services and hospitalization are inadequate.

No information is available from official sources on food rations being supplied, but information from China which has reached the Government indicates that the food situation is unsatisfactory, the staple diet provided the prisoners being soup and rice. It is reported that some additional food supplies can be purchased by prisoners and internees, but no information as to the amounts or kinds is as yet available.

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149

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