

36

SWISS LEGATION,
GERMAN DIVISION
9, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
LONDON. S.W. 1.

February 21st, 1918.

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have the honour to submit a report covering a visit of inspection to the Working Camp for Combatant Prisoners of War at E A S T G A T E, Durham, on February 18th, 1918.

Since January 1st, 1918, this camp has been affiliated to Catterick.

PREVIOUS VISITS.

Eastgate Camp has been previously visited by Dr. F. Schwyzer and Dr. A.L. Vischer, of the Staff of this Legation, on June 18th, 1917, and a report was addressed to you under date of July 3rd, 1917. *nr 633406 8/8.18*

DIRECTION.

Captain H.S. Hassell is still Commandant of this Camp, and Dr. Jas. Bannermann, camp physician.

PRISONERS.

There are at present 310 German prisoners of war at this camp, including 2 Feldwebel, 6 non-commissioned officers and 2 sailors. Offizier-stellvertreter Felix Eichhorn (456. Inf. Reg.) has acted as camp leader since December 13th, 1917.

DESCRIPTION OF CAMP.

A full description of the housing, sanitary arrangements and kitchen installations, has been given in the previous report. Upon approaching

the camp a visitor,

nr 13329 18

19967.

the camp a visitor is at once struck by its neat and orderly appearance, in which respect it resembles Peak Dale Camp. It is built about 1,400 feet above sea level and commands a fine view of a vast stretch of country characterised by pine woods and pastureland. The camp is exceedingly well-planned, and good roads and paths have been laid throughout. The huts, all of a similar type, are solidly constructed and stand at a sufficient distance from each other. Perfect order and cleanliness prevail throughout the compound.

The same methodical neatness is met with on entering the huts. The dormitories could not be kept in better order. The blankets are neatly folded, all the utensils symmetrically arranged and clean and polished, and the property of each prisoner is stored on a shelf above his bed.

All the other camp accommodations are equally clean and well-kept, and the orderliness throughout the camp may be regarded as an example of the result an efficient camp leader may obtain from his fellow prisoners.

The excellent bathing place and ablution room deserve special mention on account of their good installations.

An exceptionally well-appointed camp bakery has recently been erected.

The hospital hut and medical organisations have been described in the previous report. Dr. Bannermann

visits the camp every/

MEDICAL
INFORMATION.

visits the camp every second or third day and when required, and a German sanitary orderly and two British R.A.M.C. orderlies are in daily attendance.

At the time of my visit three men were under treatment for slight ailments, and one, suffering from a slow healing wound on his shin, due to an accident in the quarry, was in bed. The normal rate of cases on the sick list is 2 - 3%, but I was informed that lately quite a number of men have reported sick without, in most cases, sufficient evidence.

WORK.

The work performed and wages received are the same as specified in the previous report. During the winter season the prisoners work, on an average, for 42 hours per week, Saturday afternoons being free.

DIVINE SERVICE.

A Roman Catholic Service is held regularly.

COMPLAINTS.

I visited all the huts and camp accommodations in the company of the British interpreter and the German camp leader. I afterwards met the latter in his private quarters and conversed with him on various matters pertaining to the camp conditions and the life of the prisoners. He informed me that the men are greatly concerned by the food restrictions recently imposed by the War Office, which he considers are the cause of any apparent discontent, as well as of the increasing number of "sick cases" reported. On the other hand the camp leader expressed the prisoners' general appreciation of the Commandant and his staff.

I completed my inspection by a visit to

the neighbouring quarry./

the neighbouring quarry, under the guidance of the Commandant. On the way we encountered the working party returning to the camp, and I carefully watched each man as he marched past. I do not hesitate to say that they all impressed me as a well-selected lot of men of a healthy, robust appearance. They showed no signs of fatigue or overwork, nor were there any indications of bodily debility due to under-nutrition. From this I conclude that the effect of the new food regulations upon the prisoners of war has, so far, been of a mental kind only in suggesting greater calamities for the future. It is only natural that everything in the way of "restriction" should impress the prisoners, especially those who have been a long time in captivity.

RESUME.

I received an excellent impression of this Camp and fully endorse the good opinion expressed by my predecessors. The Commandant, Captain Hassell, and all his able supporters, deserve great credit for the good management and high standard maintained in every respect throughout the camp.

I have the honour to be,
Monsieur le Ministre,
Your most obedient humble Servant,

A. de Sturler
Special Attache.

His Excellency,
Monsieur Gaston Carlin,
Swiss Minister,
L O N D O N.