

Barely Able to Feed Belgian Captives Now

Herbert Hoover Issues Further Appeal to Save Wheat Here That Our Allies May Have Enough

By HERBERT C. HOOVER,
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THE placing of the greater part of the Dutch merchant fleet under the flags of the United States and Great Britain will not, it is confidently hoped, deprive Belgium of the relief for which she looks to America.

The Shipping and War Trade boards are cooperating with the Commission for Relief in Belgium in securing adequate neutral shipping to carry the food and clothing which must be sent into Belgium and northern France by way of the Netherlands ports.

To meet the desperate needs of the thousands of Belgian and French caught behind the German lines the commission operates under charter a fleet averaging about forty steamships with a total dead weight tonnage of approximately 250,000 tons. From the date of its inception up to the withdrawal of the American delegates from Belgium the commission transported a total of 2,562,000 tons of foodstuffs and clothing for the stricken people. Since that time down to March 1 of this year it has transported 591,000 tons, making a total of 3,153,000 tons.

The last of the Americans concerned in directing relief work in Belgium were withdrawn May 1, 1917, one month after the departure of Brand Whitlock, Minister to Belgium, and his staff. Prior to the withdrawal of the American relief delegates a plan had been worked out by which the work was to be carried forward by Spanish and Dutch delegates. A Spanish director was placed in charge of the work in Belgium and a Dutch director was given jurisdiction over northern France and the Belgian Etats.

The work of ravitaillement in Belgium and France has been carried forward by these neutral agencies, but the functions of the new delegates are quite different from those which the American delegates performed, for their duties now are confined to the reporting of infractions of the guarantees given by the German Government against the requisitioning of imported and domestic foodstuffs. The delegates' reports are made through their respective directors to the protesting Dutch or Spanish Minister at Brussels.

Jurisdiction over the distribution of food supplies and other relief is held by the Belgian national committee. This committee directs the distribution of goods received from the Commission for Relief in Belgium. All purchases of foodstuffs outside of Belgium are handled by the commission through its offices at Washington, New York, London and Rotterdam.

Shipments of supplies are controlled up to the Belgium border by the commission. The commission has a representative, Fernand Baetens, with offices at Brussels. Mr. Baetens is a Belgian and

Troops Want Good Music

PROFESSIONAL entertainers who have appeared before thousands of soldiers in the training camps in the United States are of the opinion that one result of the innumerable concerts has been the raising of the standard of the programmes. Says one singer:

"When the mobilization first began it was supposed that the men wanted only ragtime, jazz band and mooney-looney-wishy-washy stuff, but a few of the good old musical standbys given as encores soon proved by the applause they won that the soldier boys' tastes are above those credited by some producers to the Tired Business Man.

"The troops want the best music we can give them, and since many of the headliners have appeared in the camps the audiences have become critical.

"One thing is sure, they don't want cheap heroics about marching into Berlin. It doesn't ring true, and if there is any place where a man learns true valuations it is in the training camps."



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has been a member of the commission almost from the time of its inception. He takes charge of the shipments at the border and receives from the Belgian national committee a receipt for deliveries.

From this and the fact that the commission attends also to the financing of the work of relief, it can be seen that the real work of caring for the stricken peoples of the occupied districts still rests with the generous citizens of the allied countries and America. In the work of financing the relief programme America is playing a leading role.

The commission receives \$9,000,000 each month from the United States Treasury, which is in the nature of a loan to the Belgian Government. Each month \$6,000,000 is also loaned to the French and is expended by the commission for

the relief work in the northern sections of the invaded republic. All European expenditures are paid from the French and British treasuries to the commission at London and amount to about \$7,500,000 each month.

The commission by these funds, which aggregate about \$20,000,000 a month, is enabled to provide a daily ration barely sufficient to sustain life among 9,000,000 men, women and children dependent for the most part upon the help of this country and the allied governments. Private charities of America and the funds given by generous Americans to the Commission for Relief in Belgium provide the supplementary meals and necessary medicines and other supplies required for the children, the aged and infirm.

From the very outset it has been necessary to weigh carefully the expenditure

Daring Linemen Who Fix Battle Telephones

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the centre of a perfect hell of German shrapnel for nearly a week, until it became almost untenable and was abandoned by the headquarters staff.

"The General gave instructions that a telegraphist was to remain behind to transmit important messages from the brigades, and I was left in charge of the instruments in this shell swept chateau for a day and a night.

"On the second day the Germans broke through our trenches and the wires were cut by the shell fire. I was given orders to evacuate the building and smash up my instruments. I saved by burying in a shell proof trench, and then I had to escape between our own fire and that of the enemy's across a field under a terrible tornado of shrapnel.

"On the early morning of the same day one of our cable detachments was cut up and another captured by the Germans, only to be retaken by our sappers and drivers after a desperate and glorious fight."

The linemen also have regular patrols, stretches of line which have to be constantly examined not only for breaks but also to make sure that they have not been tapped by enemy spies in such a way that every bit of information sent over them finds its way to the Germans. In the Aisne once, where the hill country afforded good cover to spies, the wires were constantly being tapped.

One day a lineman passing along the road noticed a lot of cable lying at one side. He started to coil it up and found that a piece of wire had been tied to the main line. When he traced it he found that it ran to a haystack. He went

on, tapped the line and sent in word to headquarters and an armed escort found a spy hidden in the hay with several days supply of food.

They are autoerats in their way, these wire repairmen, and no one is permitted to interfere with the swift execution of their work. Word coming over the line that the wire to a battery was repaired is often the sweetest sound in the world to an observation officer up front, even if it comes in a rough brogue which French weather has not improved.

So when anybody else breaks in on the line and interferes with the repairman he gets riled, especially if he has been sitting for several hours in a shell hole with an icy rain dripping down his back. An English officer told of what happened to a General who broke in once.

"A General came in the hut and told me 'I rang up the telephone just now and said, 'Give me the — Brigade, please,' but some one with a loud voice replied deliberately and distinctly: 'Git off the blinking line.' Of course I got off, but as soon as convenient I should like to speak.' I apologized and explained that the line had been down and was being repaired. He went off with a merry twinkle in his eye."

As the number of men in the American Army abroad grows with the weeks, the number of linemen, those who make possible all that the artillery and infantry together accomplish, will steadily increase until they are a small army in themselves. And probably it will not be long before announcement will be made that some plain Bill Smith, wire repairman, has been given a medal for bravery under fire, which attracted attention even among the hundreds of brave acts which these men perform every day.

Need Abroad More Desperate Than Ever Though Dutch and Spanish Handle Relief Supplies

of every dollar. The relief needed was so widespread that only by infinite pains and carefully prepared estimates was the work of giving help in every quarter made possible. Every American organization has in some manner played a part in this work, and Americans have reason to feel proud of the noble achievements which their funds and time have accomplished.

The most recent of the notable American efforts for this cause has been the task of gathering 2,500,000 suits of clothing by the Red Cross. This work was taken up by the Red Cross at the suggestion of the commission and will give to the beleaguered patriots of Belgium fresh inspiration to stand firm against the insidious propaganda which their German oppressors are using.

The time has come when every American must help in the relief work in Belgium. It may be that all cannot contribute directly to the commission's funds; it may be that all cannot give in a material way to this great humanitarian cause. But there is one way in which we all can help. We can cut down the amount of wheat we eat.

From now until the day peace is signed every American must sacrifice. The greatest sacrifice must be made in the consumption of wheat. The Food Administration has pounded away on this point so long that it would seem as if every man, woman and child in this country must realize the necessity of saving wheat.

If the Allies are to be fed and if the people of Belgium are to be given bread we must look to Americans to take from their tables the rations which our European associates must have. We have no reserves of wheat in this country. We must send hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat abroad. There is only one way in which we can answer the call. We must deprive ourselves of breadstuffs made entirely of wheat.

Every one knows that America in the past has been a wastrel with food. There is no doubt that we are still wasting tons and tons of food. If we will stop this waste; if we will hold ourselves to strict account for every loaf of bread, we can rest assured that Europe and our men in the trenches will be given the food so vital to the winning of the war.

There is bread enough for all if none is wasted. The rout of the Hun and the relief of Belgium rest upon our will to end food waste.

Mother of the Regiment

MRS. ALICE S. WEEKS of Boston, whose son, Kenneth Weeks, was killed in the war in 1915, has been chosen as Mother of the Regiment by the Foreign Legion, which has conferred this honor upon her in recognition of her untiring devotion to American boys in France during the past two years. She has given them a mother's care; they have lived in her Paris home when on leave, and while in the trenches she has kept them supplied with underwear, candy, tobacco, gas masks and other comforts.

Before the war Kenneth Weeks was a brilliant young architect. He also had won literary success through his book, "Driftwood." But when the war broke out he cast aside his profession and his literary aspirations to join the Foreign Legion. So as to be near him, his mother followed him to France in 1915.

When the first shock caused by the death of her son had passed Mrs. Weeks became "mother" to his friends in the Foreign Legion, aviation corps and ambulance work. Gradually the work grew so that she was obliged to form a little society under the name of the Home Service for American Soldiers Abroad. In both units of this society the number of men is limited to 1,000. More cannot be taken, for intimate, personal, home loving care would otherwise be impossible.

Among its directors are Theodore Roosevelt, Bishop William Lawrence, Dr. Morton Prince, Major Henry L. Higginson, John J. Chapman of New York, and Ralph Adams Cram, the architect.