

Humanitarian effort by Switzerland

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des premières épreuves aux exercices plus compliqués, sur place d'abord puis à des distances de plus en plus longues, jusqu'à la démonstration finale. Un homme s'en fut se cacher dans la forêt, à un kilomètre environ, en prenant une route opposée à la piste que nous suivions. Le dresseur se mit à fouiller avec son dogue tout un important secteur, l'envoyant tour à tour à sa gauche puis à sa droite. Tout à coup, le chien fila vers un groupe d'arbres où s'était dissimulé l'homme qui représentait le blessé, et, l'ayant trouvé, il revint comme une flèche vers nous, tenant dans sa gueule le "bringsel," un morceau de cuir qui pend au collier des chiens sanitaires et que ceux-ci doivent prendre entre leurs dents pour indiquer à leur conducteur la découverte qu'ils ont faite. Après lui avoir mis la longue laisse, le soldat suivit le dogue en courant vers le blessé...

Les conducteurs qui suivent, eux aussi, des cours spéciaux d'instruction ont généralement le droit d'emmener leur chien chez eux, une fois le service terminé, comme les dragons gardent leur cheval. La mobilisation leur a permis de poursuivre leur entraînement et notre armée dispose aujourd'hui de plusieurs détachements parfaitement à la hauteur de leur tâche.

(*Tribune de Genève.*)

HUMANITARIAN EFFORT BY SWITZERLAND.

(*"Glasgow Herald," 6.2.40.*)

Between 2,000 and 3,000 inquiries relating to prisoners of war and others in belligerent countries are now received daily by the Central Agency for War Prisoners in Geneva, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

From Berlin, London, and Paris lists of prisoners are now coming in regularly. Photostat copies of these lists are immediately circulated by the Swiss agency to the Governments concerned, and relatives are informed. Particulars of civilians and others interned in neutral countries are also being received from such diverse places as Belgrade, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Riga, Stockholm, and Turcynasky Sv. Martin in Slovakia.

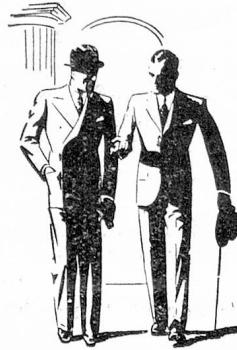
This typical humanitarian effort by neutral Switzerland is quickly developing. Reports from Geneva indicate that once again Swiss drawn from all classes are freely offering their time and their services to the central agency, many hoping to prove thereby that even in war humanitarianism is not dead. Moreover, they are aware, too, that neutrality — however ancient and traditional — involves duties as well as privileges, and that this is a very good way of justifying to the world the astonishing immunity from the horrors of war which their country has enjoyed for so long.

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When the central agency got to work in August, 1914, it boasted of only one typewriter and a staff of seven — soon to be increased to 1,200. To accommodate this staff the Rath Museum in Geneva had to be emptied of its valuable collections and additional buildings commandeered. In the end some 3,000 men and women were employed, most of them without remuneration, many in the evening after work.

In the cold language of statistics, the central agency during those four years dealt with more than 4,500,000 war captives. The British section alone included 500,000 cases, 100,000 letters, and 6,000 telegraphic dossiers. The evidence of French prisoners regarding comrades reported "missing" filled 228 volumes of 400 pages each. More than 120,000 people personally visited the agency in Geneva, while the mail increased to 15,000-18,000 letters a day.

By the end of 1917 the cost of all this work amounted to nearly 3,000,000 gold francs and close on 18,000,000 gold francs paid into the agency for the benefit of war captives had been safely transferred to the men. During the entire war a Genevese forwarding firm despatched upwards of 1,884,000 parcels to prisoners in every country in the world free of charge.

The work of the Swiss agency is governed by the International Convention for the Treatment of Prisoners of War of July 27th, 1929, accepted by 47 States. The spirit of the convention is that war captivity, far from being penal, should be considered mainly precautionary. Thanks to the convention, the lot of the war prisoner is now felt to be as thoroughly safeguarded as that of the wounded under the old Red Cross convention, and such abuses as occurred in the last war should now be impossible.

Two important provisions of the convention are that no belligerent may refuse information to the Geneva Agency, and every prisoner "should be allowed to write home to his family as soon as possible and to receive and to send a number of letters each week."

By an arrangement between the British, French, and German censors and the Geneva Agency short messages about strictly family affairs may now be sent to civilian relatives in belligerent countries. These messages are at present limited to 20 words, to be sent telegraphically through Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Britain at a charge of 7d.