

# American Friends Service Committee

20 South Twelfth Street



Philadelphia, Penna.

## BULLETIN ON RELIEF IN FRANCE

Bulletin #53

May be Used for Editorial Comment and Re-publication

February 17, 1944

Efforts to arrange for food supplies for the children of France and for refugees in internment camps are being continued by the American Friends Service Committee. Licenses further to those reported in bulletin #52 of December 27 have been filed in Washington.

Reports describing the deepening need and the services of Secours Quaker have recently been received through neutral channels. With reference to the food situation the report dated September states:

### NEEDS IN FRANCE

"The food situation has been bad in many parts of France this summer, and will be desperate this winter. France still produces plenty of the essential foods but much goes to the black market, i.e., into the mouths of those who can afford to pay fantastic prices, and what is left is entirely insufficient to maintain a decent standard of health. Transportation difficulties render distribution inefficient. The most needy region is undoubtedly along the Mediterranean coast, and Secours Quaker proposes to concentrate a good part of whatever food may be available this winter in working in these southern departments.

"Semi-officially it has been said that 50 percent of the children in towns are pre-tubercular, and the government is carrying on an anti-tuberculosis campaign and endeavoring to send children to the country for a couple of months at least every year. In the south this summer, the only vegetables available to supplement rationed foods, on which it is impossible to live were tomatoes, egg-plants, poivrons. Fruit was scarce and expensive. In future vegetables too will be rationed - 200 grs. per day per person.

"There is still a fairly adequate supply of powdered and condensed milk for the young babies, but the official ration is often not available regularly for those a little older, and baby foods are extremely scarce. The fresh milk supply is completely irregular in most areas, and the milk is bad. The authorities are becoming more and more worried about adolescent children. Teachers complain that owing to malnutrition boys and girls at this age are completely unable to concentrate on mental work, and the examinations show lamentable results. Adults, too, complain of loss of memory after the slightest mental effort.

"The clothing shortage is becoming acute, and there will be great suffering this winter. One sees many of the poorer children with rags wrapped around their feet, or obviously home-made shoes. Last winter teachers were already complaining that the pupils could not concentrate because of the cold.

"Investigations are already being made, as they were last autumn, to decide which towns and villages are most needy in case food should be available to distribute in the school canteens. Already requests are coming in from all sides, both private and public institutions looking forward to the winter with something like

horror. If food can be obtained in Switzerland, distribution through these school canteens will be the most important project during the winter. It is probably too much to hope that clothing may be found from some source."

#### QUAKER SERVICES

Secours Quaker has been able to maintain a varied service for infants and children although shortage of supplies has considerably reduced the numbers who could be cared for. Some 350 children are estimated to be in Quaker colonies and several hundred are receiving assistance in food and funds through the home colony service. Services for infants and mothers have been considerably reduced due to the shortage of supplies, although the recent gifts of Swedish committees may make it possible to extend this service again during the critical winter months.

Any food supplies available are to be used for distributions which are planned as follows:

In school canteens, in Marseille, Nice, Cannes, and other coastal regions where children are suffering from undernourishment, under the close supervision of Secours Quaker.

In children's colonies and preventoriums.

To sick internees in camps.

To the "Gouters des Meres" (distribution centers for expectant mothers.)

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