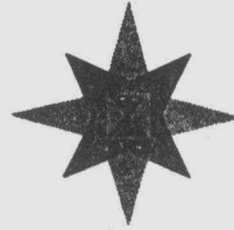


FOREIGN SERVICE BULLETIN



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VOL. II NO. 1

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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

American Quakers are Again at Work in France

by CLARENCE E. PICKETT

Clarence E. Pickett, Executive Secretary of the AFSC, returned just before Christmas from England and France. He was in Paris for ten days where he met with representatives of each delegation of Secours Quaker as well as with other relief officials.

One of the first communications to be sent from Secours Quaker to America when direct word by cable was at last possible, was the Christmas greeting from Henri Van Etten in Paris:

"CHRISTMAS GREETINGS. WE REJOICE THAT AMERICAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH FRIENDS AGAIN WORK TOGETHER."

We can hardly grasp what this means. Not only are French Quakers able to communicate directly with the outside world again, but their American and British co-workers are actually on French soil now, working with them as they face the enormous needs of their homeland. Reports of conditions have been heard, the scenes of devastation have been visited, organizational details of the cooperation have been talked through and work is actually under way.

The People Are Bewildered

There is no doubt about the need. Clothing, blankets, tarpaulin and materials for emergency roofing are of prime importance. The present winter is the time that is going to count most, both from the point of view of human privation and of restoring the faith of the French in the intentions of their liberators.

This is the case particularly in Normandy. I stopped at Le Havre where the port was a scene of devastation, the harbor cluttered with wreckage and no apparent attempt was being made to clear it. The most significant feature was the bewilderment of the people in these northern centers of France—they feel they are less well off materially than before the liberation, and they find it difficult to understand that England and America, to whom they looked for help, should have brought this devastation to them, and then, as they think, deserted them.

Although Friends have accepted as a cardinal principle the idea that relief should be completely non-political, here is a situation where the political implications of relief justifiably could be accepted: if we fail the French now the effect may be to embitter Anglo-American-French relationships for a considerable time.

The main problem is one of supply and internal transport, but there are certain indications that transport will somehow be found if only supplies are made available.

Need of Help from Outside

Secours Quaker has grown in strength during the occupation. Yet there was every evidence that foreign personnel was welcomed in France, and that workers from abroad would be a source of new power to French Quakers who had sustained the sudden shock of fresh responsibilities during serious times. There was a sense of loneliness, of clinging to people from the outside world which I believe was part of the aftermath of the isolation they endured for four years. It is little use, however, to send workers into France unless we are able to send materials for them to work with.

We face the new year with new knowledge of appalling devastation and human misery to be met. We also face the new year with the joy of a reunited fellowship of service. French Quakers are deeply conscious that the relief work to be done will lay upon them a burden beyond their resources. Our concern for their need is already evident by virtue of the presence of AFSC workers in France. Certainly America, a country of relative abundance which has been free from bombings, has a particular responsibility to help carry this burden.

I hope that all of our efforts to bring physical help may be carried through with a delicate understanding of the supreme need of the restoration of confidence and faith. We may make mistakes, but there can be little doubt about the clear call to America to share our abundance and to show our fellowship with others by working with them to restore a broken world.

* * *

PARIS COLD AND HUNGRY

Paris is cold and hungry. Prices are fantastic. Our first restaurant lunch, a modest one, cost us 63 francs each. (\$1.26 app.) A man's suit costs about 7000 francs (\$140.00). The emptiness of the shops in the Latin quarter is comparable to the position of Vienna in 1919.

—Friends Relief Service report

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Devastation in Normandy

by HELGA HOLBEK

The following is a report of conditions in Normandy as seen by Helga Holbek, head of the Toulouse delegation of Secours Quaker, who made an official tour of the Channel Ports between October 25 and November 2.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

After the liberation of Normandy, contradictory rumors circulated speaking on the one hand of the terrible destitution prevailing, and on the other of the country's wealth and unsuspected abundance of food.

On actually visiting the district we found that the two statements were correct; black destitution, but abundance of food.

In order to understand the situation in Normandy, it must be remembered that the province is now completely cut off from the rest of France as a result of the complete suspension of railway traffic for civilian needs.

Most of the railways have been damaged by bombing; only a few main lines have been repaired by the allied engineers, but they are strictly reserved for military traffic. The same is true of the roads; the national highways are reserved for military traffic.

All bridges have been destroyed; the Army is building temporary ones for its own needs, but removes them elsewhere when it no longer needs them at any particular spot.

As for cars, they have either been taken by the Germans or remain in the garage because of lack of fuel and tires.

For these various reasons the French authorities have not up to the present been able to include Normandy in their program of relief for devastated regions.

Everywhere we went we were warmly welcomed, being practically the first people to come from outside with a view to bringing help.

Isolation weighs heavily on all.

"Post-War" vs. "Post-Liberation"

We were often asked what had become of the considerable material help prepared by the allies for the damaged areas, and which is awaited so eagerly. There is confusion between "post-war" and "post-liberation"; this is understandable when one thinks that these areas saw war in its most violent form for some weeks and that, at present, security appears to have returned, even to the point that men have come back from the underground and have not been remobilized.

However, there are hundreds of thousands of people who have to keep alive until reconstruction

plans can get under way. The prime question is to get through the winter. The problems are much too large to be the subject of voluntary effort—only official organizations would have the means to cope with them — but private organizations, thanks to their greater mobility, ought to make immediate temporary intervention.

The extent of the damage is vast; towns in ruins, fields churned up or sown with mines, ruined harvests, villages and farms wiped out and population scattered.

People Shiver Among Ruins

In many towns whole districts have been completely razed and subsequently fires lasted a week. Occasionally portions of wall remain or a church tower, but very often it is impossible to find not only the site of a house, but even of a street. A few roads have, however, been cleared through the masses of ruins. Here and there a small board is seen giving the new address, and people shivering under the ceaseless drizzle, search about in the hope of still recovering a few things, since it must not be forgotten that these ruins represent for many all their worldly possessions.

There is neither water nor gas, and only very rarely electricity; therefore no lighting.

Houses. In all towns from twenty per cent to ninety per cent of the houses are destroyed, and practically all the rest damaged, especially the roofs. A house which is otherwise in good repair very soon deteriorates when it is windowless and the roof is holed, and under the ceaseless rain of Normandy it becomes unrepairable and uninhabitable in a very short time. There are no repair materials on the spot: tiles, tarred felt, sheet iron, tarpaulins, window glass or glass substitute.

Shelter. The people are everywhere returning to the places where they used to live, even when they know that the homes are destroyed. The housing question is therefore crucial. Every room, every attic, every hovel is filled to the last square inch with people sleeping anywhere—on the floor, on tables, without bedding or blankets.

There are hundreds of thousands of bombed-out people; they possess only what they were carrying on the summer's day when they had to fly.

Then there are those whose homes only suffered partial damage; the number is not yet known and help for them has not yet begun.

Some still have a home, often greatly damaged, but they are not considered as bombed out since they still have a house.

Footwear. The situation is critical. Many fled at night in light summer shoes, and even the strongest ones have been worn out during these months. There is no means of repairing them, and no blacking to keep them in good order.

Blankets. Blankets are asked for with extreme urgency. At Le Havre alone, more than twenty thousand people are sleeping on the floor without a single blanket.

Situation in the Country. Country districts in Seine Inferieure have not suffered much. Only about 10 villages and small towns were seriously damaged.

In Calvados, on the other hand, more than half the rural districts were destroyed. Houses totally destroyed number fifty per cent; all the rest have been hit and are on the way to becoming uninhabitable for lack of repair material.

Heating. There is a total lack of stoves. In the country enough wood can be found in the ruins to see through the winter, but in the towns it is again the transport question which prevents a solution to this problem.

Food Supply. The food supply is very good, Normandy being a productive district. A great part of the cattle was, however, slaughtered or taken away by the Germans, and meat rationing is considered imminent in order to safeguard a reserve for breeding. There are sometimes local difficulties because of lack of transport.

Transport. Most of the problems which are arising could be solved if transport was available. There are tiles and glass in the country and, in fact, nearly everything necessary for rebuilding, but it is completely impossible at the moment to fetch them.

Local Relief Insufficient

Each bombed out person is given a single lump sum which varies from 1000 to 1500 francs. (At present rates 1000 francs equals about twenty dollars.)

Besides this in every town, Secours Social, the national relief organization, is working hard, particularly with large distributions of clothing. It gives, as a rule, for women, an outfit with knickers or combinations, frock, coat, shoes. For men, underclothes, shoes, suit or overcoat, mackintosh.

People necessarily go cold or wet.

In a few places a hospitality centre has been established with low price canteens.

Moreover, Secours Social has given blankets, bedsteads, cooking utensils, etc., but stocks are all exhausted and only about twenty per cent of the totally bombed out in the towns have been reached.

CONCLUSIONS

There is complete destitution everywhere, needs which are beyond any imagining, and there is a vast job to be done.

The work to be done would perhaps be particularly in the restoration of morale and energy. The people feel abandoned, disappointed that nothing is being done about them, and they have been cut off from the rest of France so long that they do not realize there are other parts of France which have suffered, in another way, but just as much.

The need is unbelievable. Hundreds of thousands of people are without the barest essentials. They are cold, have nowhere to live, no blankets, no change of underwear, no shoes, no pots to do a little cooking even if they found somewhere to do it.

The large task of reconstruction falls, of course, on the State. The necessary credits have been planned for and will be granted; but one gets a clear impression that private initiative must give an example and show the way.

This is a report made after a very brief inspection and deals only with urgent problems.

There are all the fields of long-term work for helping to resettle population, children's homes for orphans and many other questions which have not even been touched yet.

* * *

SPECIFIC DETAILS

The preceding has been a general review of conditions in Normandy. On the following four pages, specific cities, towns and villages of Normandy are mentioned, showing the extent of damage in each.

Normandy is the historic name for the section of the French coastline opposite England, which is composed of five departments. Seine-Inferieure, Calvados, Manche, Orne, and Eure. This report includes Seine-Inferieure and Calvados and their principal cities, Le Havre, Rouen, Caen, and Lisieux.

SEINE INFÉRIEURE

In general, the country has not suffered much.

The small towns of Gaudebec, Duclair, La Maillebraye, St. Valery, Fécamp, Foucarmont have suffered some damage, but in the small places the situation is less difficult than at Le Havre, thanks to mutual help among friends.

St. Léger aux Bois in the Neufchatel district, 442 inhabitants, 64 homes completely destroyed, 98 homeless.

Fontaine La Mallet, near Le Havre, 608 inhabitants, 109 homes completely destroyed, 125 homeless.

The population has, however, returned, and 500 people are already living in the ruins or with neighbors.

Le Havre

Out of 18,000 houses, 14,000 have been destroyed, 11,000 completely.

140 hectares completely razed. (Approximately 350 acres.)

Total of 40,000 bombed-out.

8,000 killed.

The Chef du Cabinet du Préfet appears to be struggling tenaciously to help the city. He speaks particularly of the sufferings of the children and asks for beds, blankets, clothes and shoes for them.

He insists on the necessity of getting means of transport. With a score of lorries and fuel, he would be able to solve nearly all the urgent questions; repair material, heating and food supplies. For example, fruit is going bad in the country for lack of transport.

He asks for heavy oil for fishing vessels which, at present, cannot go out, and coal to restart the water and gas service. For the moment, there is electricity only for a few hours in the evening, if there is no breakdown, which, in fact, nearly always happens; but then there was only enough coal for four more days' electricity, and after that . . . unless some could be obtained from the Americans or the English.

He asks us to take steps in England to obtain a few small coastal steamers of 200-300 tons. Such things must be available in England. He emphasizes that all their coal used to come from England.

Disappointed in the Liberators

His whole attitude shows his sorrow at having to negotiate on a footing of inequality with people hitherto looked upon as friends and who had been

awaited so eagerly. At Le Havre one finds bitterness towards the English, and deep sorrow and disappointment. The city's life has always been directed towards England; people used to send their sons to study in England or at least to learn English. The British radio has long been promising immediate help when the country was liberated. Time is passing, and the Allied authorities (they are more and more often called the Occupying authorities) are doing nothing. Supplies are not arriving and the people feel they are being treated like an enemy country. The Allies are commandeering all the best houses. They have just commandeered the only refugee assembly center with its equipment in order to turn it into a hospital; this equipment, which constitutes only the bare necessities, had been obtained by miracles of sacrifice and hard work.

Secours Social is working desperately. Its stock of furniture, blankets, bedsteads, utensils, etc., is already exhausted. Distribution of clothes has only so far reached the 2,000th family out of the 11,000 families bombed out.

Meantime, 20,000 people are sleeping at the moment on the floor without a single blanket.

Refugees and evacuees from the country are returning daily and the housing problem is more than desperate.

The most pressing needs are: Two coastal vessels and 25 lorries with fuel. Sheet iron, tarred felt and tarpaulins for the roofs; window glass and glass substitute; lamps; warm clothing, underclothes, footwear; blankets; heating apparatus, cooking stoves, household utensils; huts for tradespeople and the bombed-out; layettes, blankets, clothing and footwear for small children; medical supplies, particularly for treating scabies and colds; soap.

Rouen

A town of 130,000 inhabitants.

30,000 completely homeless.

3,000 killed.

Twenty per cent of the houses destroyed.

No windows remain and many roofs damaged.

Certain districts (Sotteville and along the Seine) are completely destroyed.

Few houses are untouched, and it is distressing to see the time passing without any repair material arriving because of lack of transport.

We pay a visit to the Protestant minister, who tells us that his eldest daughter, aged twenty, was deported to Germany, and that his six other children are more or less ill with colds, sinusitis, etc. His house is windowless and the rain comes in everywhere through the roof. Only one room is closed to the elements, for this he used the window glass from

his library. This family is among the leading ones in the town, has private means and is not counted among the bombed-out.

Secours Social is working at Rouen and has nearly finished distributing a small bundle to each completely homeless person.

As only a fifth of the city was destroyed, one gets the impression that with swift action to bring in rebuilding material and clothing, the city will have enough vitality to begin normal life again.

The prime needs are: Sheet iron, tarred felt, tarpaulin for roofing, glass and glass substitute (vitrex), transport, footwear, blankets, clothing, crockery, utensils, tools, milk, foods, butter-milk, farinaceous foods, bottle teats, layettes. Medical supplies for treating scabies and colds are asked for by the medical director.

LISIEUX

To go from Le Havre to Lisieux, it is necessary to go back almost to Rouen before finding a ferry; there is no bridge over the Seine.

Lisieux is a town of 15,000 inhabitants; 1,000 to 1,200 were killed and many missing; two-thirds of the town destroyed.

We found the Sous Préfet in a country house recently given up by the Red Cross. In his office numerous maps show where the different raw materials he needs are to be found.

He had the population evacuated to the coast, where it is housed in hostels in the Trouville-Deauville district. Unfortunately, the hostels have no furniture. He has had a small local railway put into operation after being closed for 15 years, for the transport of refugees from the coast to work in Lisieux.

He has set up turbines in the river to get electricity.

We were to obtain information about certain people, but no list of the bombed-out exists. The whole staff at the Council Office was killed, as well as the staff of the Sous Préfet and most of the police. There is thus no one to make a list.

The mail was brought to the Sous Préfet for signing on brown paper which had been used before.

Later, when we returned to ask for information, we found that his family—he has eight children—was to sleep in the offices.

Urgent needs are: Sheet iron, tarred felt, tarpaulins for roofing; glass vitrex; transport; footwear; blankets; overcoats for boys.

VILLERS-BOCAGE

A town of 1,500 inhabitants in which there are now only 100; about 300 are in the immediate district.

Nothing is known of the others at the moment.

325 bombed houses, of which 316 are entirely destroyed.

There have been numerous cases of typhoid in the area.

300 or 400 cows were killed in the Villers-Bocage commune, and 200 in a nearby commune.

However, this town of 14 tumble-down houses, which used to be an important cattle trading center, has kept up its weekly market and folks come in from as far around as transport permits.

The people's courage here is truly magnificent.

FALAISE

A town of 6,500 inhabitants.

3,500 bombed-out.

250-300 dead.

Ninety per cent of the houses damaged.

3,000 of the inhabitants have returned.

The Sous Préfet, who is also public prosecutor, is directing everything in conjunction with the mayor.

They have set up a municipal trust fund, which pays for house repairs if people cannot do so themselves.

In the barracks, 100 people are housed and each family has one or two rooms.

It was hoped to have gas and electricity in December. The water came on again a few days ago.

Heating is provided for with wood.

An architect, who took part in the reconstruction of Paris, has arrived.

These are the most urgent needs: A number of long ladders about 40 feet long. Crockery and cutlery. All kinds of tools for carpenters and roofing workers (hammers, nails, etc.). Children's footwear. Glass and vitrex.

CONDÉ-SUR-NOIREAU

Small town at fairly important road junction. It is said that it was necessary to delay the Germans for 24 hours and this succeeded, as they had to make a huge detour, but this cost:

Ninety-five per cent of the town destroyed and many human lives.

The Allies certainly dropped leaflets a few miles away saying they were going to bomb the next town, but no one thought it would be Condé, as the Germans had left.

The greatest desolation reigns. Only near St. Martin's Church are there a few houses standing.

Many people have, however, returned and are living in unbelievable conditions.

Nothing in the way of relief has been organized—no refugee center, no canteen.

Secours Social has distributed a few clothes.

Moreover, "a lady" came in a car for a week to assist in regrouping families.

Food supply is very good and this is keeping up the morale of the inhabitants.

Urgent needs are: Sheet iron, tarred felt, tarpaulins for roofing; glass and vitrex; transport; clothing; footwear, particularly rubber boots, because of the mud resulting from bad state of roads.

Caen District

The nearer one approaches to Caen the more traces of battle are seen.

Thus we arrived at the little village of Cagny, which is completely destroyed. None-the-less, of 400 inhabitants, 200 have returned and are living in the ruins.

In the whole of this region, fields, sides of the roads, houses and even ruins are mined. There are thus almost every day accidents which are often fatal.

Most of the harvest is ruined for this reason. To save the potatoes, the method has been adopted of taking the oldest horse in the village and making it draw a roller about eight or nine yards off. The driver follows about another nine yards behind. If the horse is not blown up the roller touches off the mines and the potatoes can be gathered.

30,000 or 40,000 head of cattle have been lost.

Transport. This is a grave question in the whole department. They need 100 tons of corn daily. At Angers, 1500 tons of slates could be had and hutments from the Landes, but there is no transport.

In the coal mines no work can be done because of lack of pit props, and it is necessary to resort to primitive methods.

In the plain, only one out of ten inhabitants remain.

In Calvados there are 103,000 completely homeless.

Everything is lacking for schools — equipment, books, pencils, ink—there is absolutely nothing.

It is planned to set up school canteens, but there is total lack of equipment for cooking and crockery for serving.

The Assistant Chief Engineer of the Highway Authority at Caen told us that of the 763 communes in the Calvados Department, it was so far calculated that 450 had been destroyed. Destruction represents fifty per cent of the houses; the rest are damaged, and even those only slightly affected are rapidly becoming uninhabitable because the roofs cannot be repaired and everything is being spoiled by the rain.

THE CITY OF CAEN

A city of 60,000 inhabitants of which 45,000 remain.

Three-quarters of the city is completely destroyed and the three-quarters of the population remaining is housed in a quarter of the city.

The number of victims is not known since there are many under the ruins. Moreover, some evacuees may be traced.

No gas, no water, electricity for one hour a day on certain days.

A refugee center has been set up in the Abbaye aux Hommes, where 650 people are housed and fed. Meals are also provided for townspeople who come to get them because they have no means of cooking at home. For the winter it is proposed to open another canteen at the Préfecture and another for students at the Girls' Secondary School.

At the clearing center we slept in a room where there were about 30 children who had been there for five days. These children had been evacuated, but had come back with the last convoy. No trace has been found of their families so far. Very grave problems arise for all these probable orphans.

Secours Social is distributing clothes to everybody except infants up to four years, which are looked after by the Red Cross. They have railway vans of clothing near Caen, but have not been able

to obtain authorization from the military authorities to bring them to the unloading platform.

University Totally Destroyed

The university has been totally destroyed with all its collections, libraries, furnishings, etc. **Nothing** whatever remains. However, the Préfet, formerly rector of the university, said, in telling us of the firm resolution of the city to reopen a university: "It will be like the university at Athens, but without the sunshine." On November 3rd the university is to reopen in the École Normale buildings where the roofs are holed, and where there are no windows and nothing in the way of furniture—only a chair and a table which the rector lends his secretary every time he leaves his office. Usually there are 750 students; this year 350 are on the register, but there are no books, no desks, no pencils, yet lectures are beginning all the same. The rector is going to try to board and lodge the students, and hopes to obtain at least one blanket each for them to wrap themselves up during classes.

Urgent needs are: Lorries and fuel, coal, sheet iron, tarred felt and tarpaulins for the roofs. Equipment for the university and school requisites, blankets, food supply for the period February to May, woollens, overcoats, footwear, stoves, household articles.

AUNAY-SUR-ODON

A town of 1,500 inhabitants.

175 dead.

250 missing and many wounded.

Now there is not a house, not an inhabitant. There is nothing standing except a church tower and a few portions of church wall. Even the cemetery is completely ploughed up and they were putting the victims of last June into coffins.

The town had been evacuated by the Germans the day before the bombing; the attack was therefore unexpected and there were many victims.

Nearly all the inhabitants have, however, returned to the district, staying with neighbors, but quite without resources.

VIRE

A town of 6,000 inhabitants.

600-700 dead, many injured.

Three-quarters of the town damaged.

2,000 people have now returned to Vire.

The mayor is quite active and plans to have huts brought in for housing. A refugee centre and a canteen are operating in a convent and have been taken over recently by Secours Social.

As an indication of needs, it is pointed out that the convent alone, which was hardly hit and appears in a very good state, needs 885 square metres of roofing slates and 205 square metres of window panes for outside walls.

The nuns of the convent were the only people to remain, and they collected and looked after the injured during the battle.

Urgent needs are: Sheet iron, tarred felt, tarpaulins for roofs, glass and vitrex.



"FOR THE CARE OF THE QUAKERS"

On August 1, in the evening, a freight train passed through Montpellier to which was attached several cars of prisoners whom the Germans were sending from Toulouse to Compiègne. The next day, a station employee came to find our correspondent and gave him a packet of papers, telling him the following story:

After the train went by, a white cracker tin was found on the tracks. Among the wrappings were little pencilled missives written either on pages of a memorandum book or on tiny scraps of paper, the prisoners having used the only bits of paper at their

VILLAGES IN CALVADOS

The village of **Garcelles Secqueville** is a heap of ruins.

However, 31 of the 316 inhabitants have returned, particularly old women who cannot think of living anywhere else. They are housed in more or less intact rooms among a heap of ruins. No gas, no electricity, but for heating there is wood. It is necessary to travel six or seven miles for food supply. The wells have been contaminated by dead cattle, but there are two water tanks intact. An old woman, who had removed herself and her three cows over 50 miles away, succeeded in getting them back alive. She had also bought five hens and a few rabbits and life begins again.

Tilly La Campagne, near Caen, was a hamlet in which lived the farm hands of four large farms nearby. The latter were completely destroyed and only one inhabitant remains out of 92.

At **Bourguebus**, 50 inhabitants out of 260 have returned. Only six or seven houses still have roofs at the moment; the same number have no roof and are therefore fated to collapse soon unless material can be obtained to repair them.

Not a Living Soul

La Hogue, a completely dead village—not a single living soul. It is near the "Falaise pocket," and in the evening you could still smell the rotting corpses and beasts not yet buried.

Champois is a little village near the battlefield. In the only cafe, transferred to a garage, people tell us how they buried hundreds and hundreds of German soldiers. They had asked the military authorities for German prisoners to do this. No one came, however, and after a fortnight the stench was unbearable; epidemics were feared. The villagers, therefore, got to work, but it was too late to identify the corpses and many still remain unburied. There are also several thousand dead horses.

disposal. All the letters had on them the addresses to which they were to be sent. They were couched in brief but touching terms. The prisoners wrote that they were on the way to Compiègne and encouraged their families to hope that the nightmare would soon be over.

All the letters were wrapped in a large piece of paper which carried the words: "For the care of the kind Quakers, with our warm thanks." The same day, these letters (thirty in all) were posted in order that the news could reach the respective families as rapidly as possible.

—Perpignan, Secours Quaker report

Report on Pas-de-Calais

by ROGER WILSON

The following is based on a visit made to Berck, Etaples, Boulogne, Calais, and Lille, by Roger Wilson, Executive Secretary of Friends Relief Service, England. The trip was made from November 30 to December 4 in company with representatives of French relief organizations, under authority of the regional commissioner of the Republic.

Destruction varies greatly from place to place, and one can be deceived by first impressions. Thus one's first impression of Lille is of a town that has not been touched, but a walk around the area of Fives, which contained very large railway works, shows a large area of almost complete destruction of working class dwellings. Similarly, between extensive railway destruction on the south west side of Calais and Calais Nord, the island on which stood the port, one gets the sense of a town badly bombed but not destroyed. But Calais Nord, of which the pre-war population was said to be 15,000 and which contained the main shopping and social amenities, simply does not exist. The coastal destruction has been heavy in general. I was impressed by the degree to which the streets have been cleaned. Repairs to houses are slow. Skilled labor is scarce, but materials even more so. When one sees the extent of the destruction of the railway junctions and the huge number of derelict locomotives and burnt-out freight cars, one realizes how difficult the transport of materials must be. The problem of shelter must remain serious for a very long time.

Minefields Destroy Agriculture

Minefields are a very substantial difficulty in the restoration of agricultural life along the coast. The roads—which are often very bad, but sometimes very good—have been cleared for the most part, but all over there are warnings that the fields are still mined. Detector apparatus is extremely scarce and is needed at the front. The French are training squads for demining work, but they cannot work without apparatus and time is passing. Presumably minefields will be a nuisance through Europe wherever the Germans have had time to prepare defenses. The total extent may be colossal. There appears to be plenty of scope for attention to this aspect of reconstruction.

Anti-glider and parachute stakes are sown throughout the coastal area. Moreover, they are sewn together with wire. The stakes are another impediment to agriculture. Gangs are clearing them away slowly, but to shift them involves much labor and transport.

The general food situation remains difficult because of the problem of transport. Nowhere on the coast did we see butter or milk. In the countryside there is both; but there is less milk than the number of cows would suggest because there is so little cow

feed. We were told that butter was so difficult to transport that it was going rancid and being turned in to local soap factories.

The black market in food has been very vigorously repressed by the local prefect. This is morally good, but nutritionally difficult, since French economy is not yet reorientated to eliminate the black market, which was the only way of living under the occupation.

Clothing and blankets are scarce everywhere. This is not obvious in the streets, and, when there are shops, you see a certain amount of fancy wear but you see nothing substantial or warm. The authorities are all concerned about the blanket situation and people are considered lucky if they have one apiece. It is obvious that when half the population has been bombed out the loss of the bedding and clothing is heavy, and the bombing has come at the end of the war when the stocks are low, rather than in 1940-1941, when they were better.

Evacuees Returning

All the coastal towns were partially evacuated under German compulsion in February-March, 1944. Calais was almost completely evacuated during the siege of September, 1944. In spite of the enormous destruction, people are steadily returning and living somehow. The whole coastal area is a striking example of the strength of the urge to trek towards home, which must be expected throughout Europe, however unreasonable it may appear to administrators.

Though there is some puzzled regret at what the British do, or have done (for example the complete destruction by bombing of Le Portel in 1943 and the requisitioning of the schools in Calais), there appears to be much warmth of feeling towards the British and Canadians and all French contacts spoke of the courtesy of the British and Canadian officers. My impression of warmth may have been due to the courtesy of the French, but I do not think so entirely.

I had a strong sense that there was much satisfaction on the part of the French to be able to talk with someone from outside, who was not part of the official set-up. Their main reaction was not to talk about their own material troubles, but about the outside world. We were pretty much the first visitors, from even so far away as Paris, whom our contacts have seen for a very long time.

Further Report on Le Havre

The following is from a report of a tour of Le Havre made from December 1 to 4 by Roger Charrels of Secours Quaker and William Fraser representing Friends Relief Service of England with Secours Quaker. They made the study in preparation for undertaking relief operations there, verifying the earlier report and making certain additions which are given in part:

The special situation at Le Havre is that out of 160,000 former inhabitants (figure for 1939), only 100,000 have returned. The rest left the city for different parts of France in 1941 and 1942, either at the time of mass flight or during the earliest heavy bombings. Many of these still have habitable houses at Le Havre. It has therefore been possible, during their absence, to house part of 33,000 totally homeless by commandeering these accommodations. This situation cannot last long. Many of the evacuees will return to their homes in the next six months and very great problems will arise. As it is, the people are living crowded together in rooms, creating fresh problems from the social point of view.

No solution to the heating problem can be seen, as the wood on demolition sites belongs to the highway authority, and whatever can be burned is first divided among bakers, public offices and hospitals. In order to distribute four steres (cubic yard) for

each household for the winter, 72,000 tons of wood would be necessary, and transport is difficult. This is shown by the fact that, during the occupation, when the local authority had transport at its disposal, it was possible to bring only 30,000 tons into the city, of which 10,000 were reserved for the bakeries, and the rest divided out first to hospitals and public services, and then to inhabitants.

The change of clothing given by Entr'Aide Française (national French relief organization, successor to Secours National) is an entirely limited measure since people who only possess one shirt, one pair of pants, and so on, have to go unclothed while these are being washed. It is essential to arrange as rapidly as possible a supply of 33,000 of the most essential articles for the totally bombed-out.

It is the same situation as regards to blankets. It is estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 should be distributed.



"THE PHANTOM TRAINS"

We were the only organization which was allowed by the Germans to attend the departures of those ghastly convoys which went off to Drancy, Compiègne, and then to the unknown. We knew about their preparation and approximate moment of departure; but it happened more than once that we went trailing over to the marshalling yard with our bottles of drinking water and buckets of food only to be told:

"Oh no, the departure has been postponed. We don't know when."

Three Large Convoys

So we had to be on the continuous watch not to miss a departure completely. We watched the station, and one of us used to go to the prison camp every morning during the departure period, and to go as well up to the station in the cars with the Germans to be sure to be there.

They usually left on a Sunday morning, and then it was a bit of a job to collect us all, to prepare the hot drinks, and not the least, to carry everything to the station in a hurry and without a car. We mobilized several of the town porters with their pushcarts outside the station, and then a bright idea made us

mobilize two German soldiers to go with us in our permit-less camionnette.

There were several of these convoys: the largest took place on June 15, July 2, and July 30, with respectively 400, 450, and 1,600 persons, both Jews and political prisoners.

They Sing La Marseillaise

It was very difficult to talk to the prisoners; we were followed very closely—each one of us with two or three bayonets around us—and the doors of these dreadful cattle wagons were only opened enough to slip in the food. On July 30, when the camps at Noé, St. Sulpice, St. Michel and Caffarelli were emptied, the cars marked "40 men 8 horses" contained up to 100 men. This was changed, however; so when they definitely left, there were 60 men in each wagon, or from 30 to 45 women.

It made a deep impression on us, when one wagon door closed in front of us, to hear all the women with one voice sing **La Marseillaise**. They had courage and needed it. The last two convoys were baptized "The Phantom Trains," as one has never had any definite news about them. Did they reach the "unknown" destination? Were they liberated by the Maquis? Or killed by the bombardments?

How the AFSC is Trying to Meet the Needs in France

In November, 1944, exactly two years after the American Quaker delegates to Southern France were interned in Baden Baden, Germany, four American delegates arrived in Paris. They had come with English Friends to offer their services to Secours Quaker.

A letter from one of the AFSC delegates describes this meeting:

"All of our friends were waiting for us when we came to the upstairs room at the Paris Friends Center. Seeing them all together, knowing how all of us had anticipated this meeting when the curtain should lift a little, the coming together was almost more than any of us could bear. It is strange for our friends to speak English again, for in these last years it was hardly safe to speak English.

"All of them have felt our love and support during this time of separation and have waited eagerly for our coming, working in tragedy in the expectation that we would come to help."

The "Société des Amis," under whose auspices Secours Quaker is administered, has accepted the offer of personnel, supplies, and financial aid, and the program of this international relief service is already under way.

Program

In the cities of Caen and Le Havre (Normandy), emergency relief work is being undertaken with the distribution of food and clothing and the transport of relief and building supplies.

Secours Quaker in the South of France has its headquarters in Marseille, with offices in Toulouse, Montauban, and Perpignan. In this region the Quaker program continues, thanks to American supplies:

Children's colonies: homes for the orphaned and destitute;

Feeding: medical canteens (supplementary meals for medically selected children and adolescents), distribution of milk to babies, pre-tubercular cases, expectant mothers, and invalids;

Individual relief: food parcels, clothes, and cash relief;

Services to the aged;

Visiting in prisons and internment camps and aid to destitute families of prisoners and internees.

In Paris, Bordeaux, Dijon, and Nancy, the chief work has been that among civilian prisoners and internees: distribution of food and clothing, friendly visiting, relief of the families. This was carried on under the German authorities and is now being con-

tinued at the request and with the help of Entr'aide Francaise.

In all of its activities, Secours Quaker is aided by Entr'aide Francaise, the official French welfare agency (successor to Secours National).

Personnel

Plans are under way to send to France a group of some sixteen American and thirty British workers.

Supplies

Supplies of food from Switzerland, purchased by Quaker delegates in Geneva, with the cooperation of the International Red Cross, have been arriving in Southern France since mid-November: milk, babies' foods, sugar, cheese, etc.

Other foodstuffs such as sardines, sugar, oil, and dried vegetables have been purchased by our delegates in Lisbon and Madrid, and some have already reached Southern France.

Quaker delegates have also shipped to France fifty-one tons of yard goods, soap, and clothing, ten trucks, and two automobiles.

Entr'aide Francaise is transporting many tons of clothing, bedding, and repair materials to Normandy for the AFSC and other American supplies to Southern France. British Friends, from their meager stocks, are sending generous quantities of clothing and babies' food and six trucks.

Only a beginning has been made. As soon as adequate shipping is available from this country, if support from generous friends continues, the AFSC hopes to be able to bring much more substantial aid to the valiant people of France. In the meantime, supplies must be kept flowing in from neutral countries. This winter of suffering is already partly spent, but there are many months of privation still ahead.

* * *

THE MIRACLE OF THE DANISH LARD

"The greatest event, up to the time that help from the outside seemed hopeful, was the miraculous arrival of ten tons of Danish bacon, at the end of June when communications were almost impossible. The energetic young Attaché at the Danish Legation met the lard at the border and insisted so long that he managed to get the wagon attached to a passenger train and brought it safely through France down to the South. The second miracle was that it made all that long journey without a single railroad accident.

Daily we have visits from grateful parents whose children are profiting from the lard distribution and whom one can almost hear growing!"

—Toulouse, Secours Quaker report

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