

Crystal City, Texas, July 3, 1943

Translation of a Report to Mr. H. Bruppacher of the Legation
of Switzerland, dd July 2, 1943

In accordance with your request, I am giving you herebelow a short report on the medical care given to the inhabitants of the Alien Internment Camp at Crystal City, Texas, based on present conditions.

The hospital was put into operation on July 1st. It can be said that the 50-70 beds available in the hospital will suffice for a camp population of 2000-2500 persons, assuming that there is no basic change in the general state of health and, especially, that no communicable diseases will occur to any great extent.

However, it is not yet possible to handle any surgical or obstetrical cases as the sterilizing equipment necessary for this type of work has not yet been received. This equipment is on order and can be expected to arrive any day now.

The diagnostic work in the hospital is greatly hampered by the lack of an electrical centrifuge. Such a centrifuge is indispensable for serological blood tests, urinalyses and stool examinations, especially here where diagnostic examinations have to be made of people who have lived in the tropics for a long period of time and who, therefore, are almost certain to be infected with parasites. Furthermore, the complete lack of medical books is greatly felt. It goes without saying that a certain number of professional books are needed in any hospital. A request for such books was put through some three months ago and there was no doubt in anybody's mind as to the urgency with which they were required. Yet, none have been received to this day although books are neither rationed nor difficult to obtain.

In addition it should be mentioned that the camp still lacks a proper isolation or quarantine station. There is a separate cluster of shelters which is shown on the map as isolation and quarantine quarters but up to the present day it has not been possible to keep these shelters reserved for this purpose. They are now being used for a variety of purposes, e.g. for storage, church activities and provisional quarters. It is clear that a camp, where people from different countries and climates live together and where further people from countries with doubtful sanitary conditions are expected, must be regarded as a potential hot bed of epidemics even more than an ordinary camp. It should, therefore, at least be possible to take the precautionary measures customary in any ordinary camp, i.e. the facilities should be provided to isolate immediately any person stricken with or suspected of a communicable disease.

Except for these facilities and equipment still lacking, the hospital is in accordance with the requirements of the camp and can be regarded as absolutely satisfactory. There are available at the hospital all diagnostic and therapeutical facilities for any cases as are likely to occur in this camp, especially if the present plan is carried out to procure for this camp the services of a specialist for diseases of the eyes, ears, nose and throat and to arrange for the transfer to this place of an experienced gynecologist at present interned at another camp. For the rest, the staffing of the hospital as well as the equipment of medicines and instruments are most satisfactory.

With regard to the general state of health, it can be said that, so far, there have occurred only single cases of communicable diseases in a mild form, except for an epidemic of whooping cough which, however, has passed without serious complications. Injuries resulting from the few and, with one exception, light accidents that have occurred to this day, have been healed without leaving

any permanent disability. No cases of tuberculosis and venereal diseases in the contagious stage have been found until now in the camp.

In the sphere of hygiene and prophylactic sanitation, work was commenced with a medical survey, the results of which form a reliable basis for judging the state of health of the inhabitants. Subsequent examinations will reveal clearly whether there is an impairment or deterioration during the stay in the camp. - This medical survey is completed, i.e. the state of health of the entire population is recorded on a card register. These cards show: height and weight - former or existing disorders - immunizations against communicable diseases - physique and nutritional state, as well as any significant changes of the skin, mucosae and teeth. - In addition, all internees, particularly minors, were vaccinated against smallpox or re-vaccinated. - The susceptibility of children for diphtheria was determined by Schick test and immunizations against diphtheria will be carried out in the near future on the basis of the results. - Inoculations against typhoid are being given those who ~~will~~ request them and it is intended to immunize against tetanus all those especially exposed, e.g. the children and men occupied with wood work and farming. - Finally, all persons handling or distributing food stuff have been examined in order to determine whether they are carriers and the water from the water supply is continuously being subjected to bacteriological tests.

A pre-natal clinic has been instituted for pregnant women and mothers of newly born babies. The state of health of the children in the kindergarten and at school will be kept under regular observation as soon as the vacations are over.

In general, it can be stated:~~that~~ 1) that the state of health of the camp population is quite satisfactory and does not give rise to anxiety, 2) that the available information resulting from the medical survey permits a thorough control on any deviations and 3) that all precautionary measures have been taken, particularly against communicable diseases.