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MAL-TREATED EX-PRISONERS OF WAR ASSOCIATION 007654

1323 Bape Avenue,  
Toronto, Ontario.  
May 1936.

Dear Comrade:-

Replying to your enquiry we are pleased to give you the following outline of the P.O.W. situation.

Upon signing the Treaty of Versailles, Canada demanded that Germany compensate Canadian citizens for damage caused by acts of illegal warfare. Canada received twenty-six million dollars from Germany for this purpose. The Government appointed a Reparation Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Friel to hear and award claims. Advertisements were published periodically in newspapers in every locality in Canada during about five years to the effect that claims would be entertained on the grounds of "DESTRUCTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY" through acts of illegal warfare. Mr. Friel died during the course of his commission and another commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Pugsley. Nearly all the claims heard by these two commissions were from civilians and civil corporations. About 17 military prisoners of war made claims. The awards of these two commissions totalled approximately \$7,800,000 and individual awards, both civilians and P.O.W.'s averaged between four and five thousand dollars. Some received as high as \$60,000. The highest award to a military P.O.W. was \$15,000. Upon the completion of these two commissions the Government stated that as all claimants had been heard the balance in the Reparation fund belonged to Canada and then transferred the 18 million balance to Consolidated Revenue. But an error was discovered in the wording of the advertisement. It was found that for nearly five years they had advertised under the heading of "Destruction of Life, and Property", whereas it should have read "Damage to Health life and Property."

Prisoners of war had been given to understand by this incorrect wording that only those suffering loss of life or property could make claim for compensation. Upon this misunderstanding being rectified it became apparent that prisoners of war had the same right to a hearing as any other Canadian citizen or corporation.

Prisoners of war were organized in Toronto and also in Vancouver and petitioned for a third commission to hear their claims. A third commission was finally appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Errol MacDougall and we were permitted to present our claims. Owing to the Government having previously absorbed the balance, we were first informed that

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