Morale in camps fluctuates for many reasons. Relations between the camp authorities and the prisoners are an important factor, but even in a good camp men become depressed and disheartened by long imprisonment in one place. Often an artificial crisis will be met by wholesale requests for transfers from other disagreeable reasons that the men have been in one place too long.

Sometimes when the war was at good, the arrival of United States prisoners from Africa in May, 1943, had a marked effect on the other prisoners, who began talking of getting home for Christmas. They began working at the camp occupation bureaus with redoubled vigor, and escapes became more frequent. Any such upsurge of morale is usually followed after a time by a letdown, unless other good news comes along.

Under the Geneva convention it is provided that each of the belligerent powers establish an official bureau of information. These bureaus are informed as soon as possible of all captures, and are sent continuing reports on internments and transfers, releases on parole, repatriations, escapes, stays in hospitals and deaths. This information is then passed on by the detaining power either through the protecting power, which in Canada's case is Switzerland, or through the central agency of the International Red Cross committee to the country concerned. Information regarding Canadian prisoners of war is sent from the International Red Cross to the Department of External Affairs, special section, in Ottawa. Information may also come from the British minister in Berne through the British War Office.

The Japanese have set up an official information service (kurosjohokyoku) which handles mail and is supposed to notify the International Red Cross in Geneva, but very little information so far has filtered through this bureau, except for the first notice of capture or death of Canadian personnel and the subsequent transfer of about 1,000 Canadian prisoners of war from Hong Kong to Japan.

Official visitors are permitted on behalf of the protecting power, the International Red Cross and the International Y.M.C.A. to visit camps in Europe where Canadian prisoners are interned. They are allowed to talk freely and correspond freely with the men of confidence.

Protests to the detaining power are made through one of more of the following channels:

1. In extreme cases the government concerned may summon the representative of the protecting power and ask that he communicate the protest directly to his government. This was done once by Canada when the Prime Minister, as secretary of state for external affairs, called the Swiss chargé-d'affaires from Montreal to protest the shooting of Canadian prisoners in Germany.

2. The British minister at Berne places before the Swiss government protests made by the United Kingdom or on behalf of the Dominions. Since these protests most often are based on conditions which affect the nationals of more than one of the British countries joint protests are the rule, but Canada has used this channel on several occasions for independent protests.

3. Often as a result of its protest the minister's visit the protecting power with protests on his own, without waiting for any formal request.

Complaints usually directed against violation of the Geneva convention, cover food, clothing and hygiene. In one case a protest was lodged because police dogs were used in a camp and prisoners had been bitten. In another case it was protested that the camp had been placed near a bombing target, contrary to the convention. Unreasonable delay of