

It is permitted to receive and speak freely with official visitors from the proceeding power on the International Red Cross committees, to write them freely, to lodge complaints, to receive and distribute collective consignments of parcels, food, books, etc., to organize among the prisoners a system of mutual aid, and to act as intermediary between the prisoners and the camp authorities.

Under the International Convention, the detaining power may use physically fit prisoners, other than officers, on certain types of work. Officers may ask for suitable work if they choose and may be given it. Non-commissioned officers may be compelled to undertake only supervisory work for which they receive no pay, unless they expressly request remunerative occupation. Each prisoner is entitled under the convention to 24 consecutive hours of rest each week, and his working hours are not to exceed those of civil workers of the locality employed on the same work.

Prisoners may not be used in any work directly connected with the prosecution of the war - specifically, the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions.

The convention provides that prisoners working in labour detachments (in Germany, Kommandos) will live under the same conditions as obtain in the camps with respect to hygiene, food, care in case of accidents or sickness, correspondence and the reception of parcels.

An effort is made to sort out the prisoners by trades and to give them work that is familiar. Canadians are employed in Germany in stone quarries, on river work, unloading cement, brick laying, electrical work, lumbering, agriculture, tailoring, plate-laying on a railway, freight loading and in saw mills, paper factories, sugar factories, coal mines and beet factories. Their hours of work are usually long, nine or 10 hours, and the normal pay is 20 to 25 cents a day. In addition many prisoners are employed by civilians on farms.

At the beginning of 1943 there were in Germany about 1,750,000 prisoners of war in employment. There is collaboration between the military authorities and the employment service on matters of allocation, output, pay and relation to the German war economy. A representative of the employment service is stationed at each camp, and his main objective is to achieve the maximum output consistent with the convention. Work contracts are concluded between the employer and the camp authorities, not with the prisoners.

Grades wages are computed on a basis of 60% of the wages of German civilians doing comparable work. From those wages, deductions for board and lodging may be made where the prisoner is living outside the camp, as for example, on a farm. Piece rates are about 80% of those for German civilian workers.

The convention provides that underwear, outer clothing and footwear must be supplied to the prisoner of war by the detaining power, as well as working kits where necessary. As soon as possible after his arrival at a camp the prisoner receives a Red Cross "captive parcel". This is packed in Canada and stocked in London. It contains clothing and certain personal items. At some or less regular intervals thereafter clothing parcels supplement the German issue. Under a reciprocal arrangement items are supplied by the Red Cross in the United Kingdom to all allied prisoners except those from the United States, who receive their food and clothing parcels from the United States. In addition to this, prisoners are allowed four parcels a year from next of kin.