

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR PEACE

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS :
1, LYDDON
LEEDS, 2
TELEPHONE 23650

Reply to :-

D. L. Sainty
Relief Section 109
British Red Cross
B. A. O. R.

10th February 1946

Dear John,

Report 42

Weather :

Serious flooding has occurred all over this area. Finlay is at the moment stuck about 50 miles from here, on his way back from Vlotho, and Alan managed to get back last night only after a long and circuitous journey on high ground from Gebhardshagen. It rained steadily for several days, and the whole Leine valley has been badly affected. Thousands of acres of farm land have been under several feet of water for about three days, and the mainroads have been impassable north of Göttingen for nearly two days. Friedland is very muddy. The railway line to the north is cut, so the Russians have had to be asked not to send people through the frontier until they can be got away from Friedland. About 500 came through yesterday - I don't know what is expected today.

Guides Canteen :

Their Movement Order has been cancelled.

The job :

Information received yesterday is of a stoppage of the 'casual' refugee traffic (the Russians estimate there are about 20.000 still to come, but I don't know how far their estimate can be relied on - I doubt if any one can estimate the numbers) and its replacement by "Expellees" from the new bits of Poland (we've had some of them as 'casuals'). They are to come (it is said) in trains right to Friedland, with a Polish guard of Officers and ten men on board; there they will be de-trained, encamped and retrained. They are to come with nominal rolls, and instructions have come to send them from Friedland also with nominal rolls, which may or may not work. Probably not. They are to be sent in trainloads to the various Regierung Bezirks (large Rural Districts) whose responsibility it will be to place them. This makes necessary another rather difficult and delicate piece of prognostication. So far as we are concerned, if only 20.000 more refugees come by road and the others direct to the station, I think we shall not be needed for the work we have been doing. More labour for the camp is on the way and the R Det is pretty capable. The only problem is the new circumstances would be the best method of getting people off the train and into the camp, and I don't think we should be needed for that. On the other hand, the experience of Stan and Ian on the train journey this week showed that a good deal of liaison could usefully be done, and I wonder whether we could not do a job in keeping the lines of communication open between Friedland and the various destinations of the trains. For the difficulty of dealing with a trainload of expellees on its arrival at its destination seems to me to be greater than that of dealing with people most of whom know what they're aiming at, even if it's fairly sure that what they're aiming at isn't there: they at least have some incentive to do something for themselves; I doubt if these others will have. Anyway, we'll have to consider all this carefully this week. There's to be a Conference at Bad Pyrmont, called by the FRS and starting on Friday of this week, at which they want our opinions on the future work; HQ 5 thinks it may be important in deciding what is to happen to CBSRA in this theatre.

Cheerio,

David