

# Department of External Affairs

## CONFIDENTIAL

Part Four

File No. 52-CY-400

From Sept. 19/44

To 1-9-45

### Subject:

POST WAR REPATRIATION OF <sup>Canadian</sup> PRISONERS OF WAR

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### References to Related Files

File No.	Subject
5970-A-400	Protection of civilian interest in Liberated areas of Europe
52-JT-400	Post war Repatriation of prisoners of war from War Base.
621-LU-40	Administrative Arrangement re Post-Hostilities Protection and Welfare of Canadian prisoners of war in Europe.
621-MV-400	Canadian Overseas Committee on Prisoners of War -- Minutes, Agenda

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LADS/CC  
September 6, 1945

File  
52-CY-400  
LADS

TEXT FOR PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH ON THE ADDRESS FROM THE THRONE

CANADIAN PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNED CIVILIANS

During the war years, the welfare of Canadian prisoners of war and interned civilians has been of anxious preoccupation on the part of the Canadian Government.

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Of the Canadians who were reported as prisoners of war in German hands at the time of the surrender, all but 21 have been recovered, and the majority have now returned to their homes in Canada. Every effort is being made to discover the fate of the few men still untraced. The speedy recovery of our men from German prison camps was carried out by special teams that were rushed into Germany after the capitulation. As for Canadian civilians who had been held in internment by the Germans, all who wished to return to Canada have been repatriated, the remainder have, or are being returned to their occupations and homes in Europe, or have formed new homes and new occupations for themselves. The fact that so many prisoners of war and civilian internees were able to come home in a reasonable state of health is due in large measure to the efforts of the Red Cross to which this Government has given its full support. The Red Cross parcels, packed by the Canadian Red Cross and delivered by the International Red Cross, have literally meant the difference between life and death in many cases.

The Canadian Government, normally after consultation and with the cooperation of the other Commonwealth Governments and that of the United States has been vigilant to safeguard the rights of prisoners of war held by the Germans. On frequent occasions, protests were made to the German authorities through the good offices of the Swiss Government,



and often conditions were improved as a result.

The plight of our prisoners of war and interned civilians in Japanese hands was most desperate. Though the Japanese Government officially avowed its intention of adhering to the Geneva Convention respecting the treatment of prisoners of war, the evidence is clear that in fact they never attempted to act in the manner laid down by this Convention. The whole world now knows the inhuman treatment frequently meted out to Allied nationals in the power of the Japanese.

The Canadian Government has, from time to time, joined in most solemn protests to the Japanese concerning their maltreatment of prisoners, but there is nothing to indicate that these protests have served to modify Japanese conduct in any way. Though the Canadian Red Cross was ready at any time to despatch hundreds of thousands of relief parcels to our men in the East, the Japanese permitted only one such shipment to go forward, outside of the small amount of bulk relief carried by diplomatic exchange ships.

Now that the long, terrible ordeal for internees and prisoners is past, strenuous efforts are under way to bring them home as soon as possible. Thirty officers and other ranks of the Canadian Army have gone to Manila to ensure quick relief and early repatriation for prisoners of war. Three officers of the Department of External Affairs have arrived in the Philippines to look after released civilians and return them to Canada. In addition, the Canadian Red Cross has sent representatives to Manila to give assistance to those newly liberated.

In the ensuing weeks, our liberated prisoners of war and civilians from the Far East will be returning to Canada. In the heartfelt welcome which will be accorded



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them by the Canadian people, there will be mixed a deep understanding and sympathy for the many privations and hardships they have for so long been forced to endure.

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*From*  
*Sept 15/44*

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