

U r a w a Internment Camp.Report on visit of 22nd June, 1945.

This report is based on the new questionnaire, issued on 1st of May 1945, and intended for use for the visit of civilian internment camps.

In this report only such questions are mentioned as have cropped up since last visit, or have been taken up specially by the internees.

I. Introductory remarks.

This time not only one, but three gendarmes were present during the delegate's visit to the Urawa camp.

2. The visit was made by E. Ruch, who was accompanied by Mr. Morosawa.
3. Date of the visit: June 22nd, 1945.
4. The visit lasted for 3 hours and ran according to the following scheme:

Arrival at camp:	0900hrs.
Interview with police:	0900 - 0930 "
Meeting with all internees assembled:	0930 - 1130 "
Interview with police:	1130 - 1200 "
Leaving the camp:	1200 "

5. The delegate was accompanied by a gendarme in plain clothes when he left Karuizawa at 0142 hrs. in the morning of the visit. This gendarme was not present during the visit, only during the journey to and from Urawa.

Apart from overcrowded trains (the delegate had to sit on the floor of a freight car during the whole journey to Urawa) nothing special happened.



6. The following representatives of the Japanese authorities were present:

- a) The sub-commander of the Urawa camp, police corporal Suzuki, who had no authority to take any decisions whatsoever,
- b) The translator of the police, Mr. Kanda,
- c) A gendarmerie-sergeant and two other gendarmes who met the delegate at the entrance of the camp.

The commander of the camp was conspicuous by his absence, this probably due to the presence of the gendarmerie.

7. The interview with the police as well as the interview the delegate had with the internees were both strikingly calm and easy. The internees seemed not to dare to make any substantial claims and it was mostly up to the delegate to haul the requests out of the internees.

It seems that the presence of the gendarmes has frightened both the police and the internees. With regard to the settlement of the internees' requests, nothing could be done during the visit, as the camp sub-commander could or would take no responsibility for any decision, even the most unimportant, during the absence of his chief.

V.

Washing and bathing facilities.

1. Due to the recent bombardment, the camp was without electricity for several days, during which time the electric water pump could not be used. In such emergencies there is all the more reason that the hand-pump should be in order, but this being not the case, the camp suffered water-shortage.

Due to fuel-shortage, it is no more possible for the internees to have hot water for the laundry.

2. As mentioned in last report, the internees had to satisfy themselves with the use of the bath provided for the police.

The internees declare having had no bath since the 15th and the 29th of May. The police excused itself and made the

fuel-shortage responsible for this regrettable fact, which they promised to discuss with the commander upon his return.

VII.

Food.

1. The internees declare that they now know the generally prevailing food difficulties also outside the camp, and while stating the food to be what it has always been, too short, they do no more complain about it as they see that their complaints are of no avail.
2. The bread the internees now receive becomes too old and stale as they receive their rations 6-7 days in advance. The internees state that they, therefore, ought to toast all their bread but are prevented from doing so by lack of fuel, specially charcoal and wood.
3. The internees' vegetable garden is now making a fair progress, but the internees ask for props and bamboo sticks, as without these it obviously becomes impossible for them to cultivate their plants. The request was at first turned down by the camp commander, but the delegate insisted upon having this justifiable desire from the internees fulfilled, as it was of the utmost importance for the camp inmates, who are suffering so acutely from food-shortage, to be able at least to extract as much as possible from their own garden.
4. The internees can no more make any hot water for tea outside the meals owing to lack of fuel.
7. The confidence men make the following requests:
 - a) They want more fuel, charcoal or wood. The whole camp now receives only one bale of charcoal a month against a necessary minimum of 3 bales for toasting the bread and 2 bales for making hot water for tea.
The fuel-shortage also has another detrimental effect. The internees are not able to cook the vegetables they grow.

b) The internees receive tea at all meals, but were previously also making tea outside the meals. This tea can no more be had. The confidence men ask the Swiss Legation about the possibility of having an extra supply of tea for the camp. For the Minister's information, the quantity supplied monthly by the police is 50-60 lbs. for the meals. The quantity needed by the internees as extra tea for drinking outside the meals would be about the same quantity.

XII. Religious activity.

Some of the internees (the Catholic missionaries) ask for prolongation of the use of the chapel. As the matter could not be generally discussed due to the camp commander's absence, the delegate has treated this question in the special report.

XIII. Recreation and exercise.

2. There is a general request for more books. The delegate was specially asked to get in touch with the Y.M.C.A. about this question. The head confidence man particularly made a demand for French books.

There is also a strong demand for writing paper, note books, stationery in general, pencils, etc.

XVI. Discipline.

4. The internees had the pleasure of informing the delegate that the Legation's efforts in reducing the number of roll-calls finally had born fruit. Since this month only two roll-calls are made in the Urawa camp instead of the former three.

XVII. Distribution of relief parcels.

During the month of June, the Red Cross made a delivery of 3 packages containing:

Woollen clothing for 5 men,
Overcoats for 15 men,

which were as equally and rightly distributed among the camp inmates as possible.

CONCLUSION: The situation prevailing in the Urawa camp can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The presence of the gendarmes has scared both the police and internees and the latter have become conspicuously soft in their complaints and requests.
- 2) The food situation, which remains as bad as before, is made still worse due to the absolute unwillingness of the police to help the internees to even very simple advantages which might alleviate the shortage of food. The internees being unable to go out of the camp to cut themselves the necessary bamboo sticks for their vegetable garden, meet a flat refusal from the police when they ask the latter to supply them (on the internees' own cost).
- 3) Bathing and laundry is made difficult, if not to say impossible, due to fuel shortage.
- 4) The delegate hereby takes the liberty of suggesting to pay a visit to the Saitama Prefectural Authorities on the occasion of his next trip to Urawa. The delegate has the feeling that the constant presence of the gendarmes during his visits to the camp is detrimental to the willingness of the police to discuss openly with him. It might be that the delegate, when talking with the "Tokko-Kacho", the official in charge of the internees, is able to obtain some results.

Karuizawa, June 25th, 1945.