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Maurice Pate's 1916-1917 Diary [PART 2 of 3 for PDF] -- of his first year of relief work (Commission for Relief of Belgium). Note by Mrs. Pate --Remarkable record of Maurice Pate's Relief War Work, World War I. Page 41 - 80

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K.A. Brisson

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The cars were crowded with "fraudeurs" (smugglers) and their baskets of butter, meat, eggs, wooden shoes, and leather. At La Fostingue the procedure is very interesting. The German soldiers at the French frontier (and *étape* electric lines) have a soft spot for one and two-mark notes (25 *fr* and 50 *fr*) when there are no officers in sight. As soon as the coast is clear, the smugglers hurry across the line, dropping incidentally the "admission" fee. The food products once in France, especially in the large towns like Roubaix and Lille are sold for fabulous prices.

Returning from the frontier to Tournay I spent the rest of the afternoon at the office. Marie, Mr. C's servant, just received the news of the requisition of her brother at Gaurain nearby. In the village of 3,900, over 150 men were taken. The whole town banded together and furnished all the men with warm winter clothing, a temporary food supply, and in many cases money.

Lieut. Willis arrived from Brussels at 5.30 with the Sarah B. - proudly flying a brand new C.R.B. flag. My trunk from America was brought at the same time. On opening it I found two pairs of new shoes - which are worth their weight in silver here now, winter overcoat, rubber overshoes, and everything else carefully provided for a Belgian winter. Gave Mr. C. a lesson in the evening, and rolled in early.

Sunday. Oct. 22 Mr. C. left for Hasselt at 6.20 a.m. to visit his brother, who last month lost his son at the front. Spent an hour at the office and received several visits, one from a lady who wished us to secure a passport to enable her to go to Switzerland. These extraordinary little demands, however, become now a part of the daily routine.

French lesson at Mr. Crunelle's. Had lunch at the "Cathedral". Later in the afternoon I went out to Mrs. Dumon's for an hour. Afterwards Lieut. Willis, another officer, Count Schmettove and I went to the Mount for supper. The cannonading toward Lille was very heavy during the afternoon and evening. Returning to the office, I wrote there until bed-time.

In accordance with the new proclamation of the *étappen-general* issued this morning, everyone starting today must be indoors at 5 o'clock in the evening and cannot leave the house again until 6 in the morning. At 5.30 I took a walk through the town - not a sign of life except for an occasional soldier.

Monday. Started out with Willis in the machine at 8 o'clock. We visited the Commandant at Antoing, and afterwards the communes of Perennes and Miers. At the latter place the requisition of young men was just taking place. We were asked to intervene, but under the present circumstances can only aid the workers for the *Ravitaillement*.

At Feruwelz we met Mr. Baugines. Spent an interesting half hour

/there

there and departed with a precious two dozen eggs which he gave us (Eggs are now (1.20 a dozen). Returned to Tournai by Leuze; cutting the étape line in all four different times.

Was present at the opening of a new Soupe Scolaire (Cantine for Children) at 11 a.m. Had lunch at De Ceynst's with Mr. Janson. Spent a busy afternoon at the office.

The town received this afternoon the affliction of a fine of 200,000 marks for not having given the list of chomeurs (men out of work) to the military authorities. Six days are given in which to pay, with an additional fine of 20,000 marks for each day's delay in giving the list. It is generally believed that the town will refuse to pay, and suffer the consequences no matter how severe. The second day today of the new 5 o'clock retiring rule - at 4.30 the town of 40,000 is the picture of animation. At 5 o'clock it is as dead, the streets are as deserted as the most deserted country village.

Tuesday. Mr. C. returned from Hasselt. Started out at 8 a.m. with Willis. We visited the Commandant at Velaines, and afterwards the magasin. The flag of the C.R.B. and that of the German Commandant are suspended from the same building 10 feet apart and both at the same height. On arriving at Velaines the officers tried to replace the C.R.B. flag with the "red, white and black", but on being told that the former was "drapeau Américain" at once changed their mind.

We visited the installations at Celles, Molembaix, Mt. St. Aubert - discussing American politics en route. The spirit in Germany, on account of America's furnishing of ammunition, is generally anti-American. The number of U.S. citizens in the allied armies provokes daily comment in the German Press.

On returning I visited the quai where the "Calvados" is making a trial "chargement" of flour for Lille. Am accompanied always by an officer when in the machine. Have been offered an orderly - a German soldier who makes himself generally handy - but for the present will be able to do without one.

Mr. De Hancq, had lunch with us at Mr. C's. After lunch we took a walk ending up at the office, where we talked over a number of things.

Leach arr'd from Brussels. Willis dropped in for an hour - the C.R.B. flag will have to be removed from the auto according to imperial mandate, because only German generals fly flags on their machines.

Had one of my many interesting talks with Mr. Wilmart on different subjects. After our work was finished at 7 o'clock I walked with him as far as his house as "body-guard", on account of the 5 o'clock rule.

Spent the evening reading and writing.

Wednesday

Wednesday. Started out again with Lieut. Willis at 8 o'clock. We visited several German officers for passes, information, etc. Have been informed that we are to have in the region 9,000 refugees from the Somme after the first of November - which means important changes in the ravitaillement.

During the morning we visited Facq, Estainbourg (where I saw my friends Mr. & Mrs. Duchatelat), and Templeuve. On the way home I secured 200 lbs. of potatoes which are becoming now very rare.

Had lunch with Lieutenant Willis at his home, dining on the regular army ration. The German bread, in large part rye and potatoes, is not very good. After lunch we spent an interesting hour in which he told some of his experiences during the past two years. While in front of Reims four months he had a difficult time. For every shell which the French fired into a village on the German side of the line - the Germans dropped four in Reims. This soon ended bombardment of the village. It is interesting to hear from Germans the same kind of stories regarding treatment of prisoners, civilian sniping, manufacture of munitions etc. - as we hear from the sympathisers with the allies.

Spent the afternoon at the office. Leach had supper with us at Mr. C's, and we spent the evening looking at pictures taken during Mr. Castaigne's voyage.

Thursday. Left for Brussels on the early train. At the office I found welcome letters from mother, father, Harry, Sam, Bohner.

Attended meeting of C.N. in the morning. Lunch at the C.R.B. offices. At the afternoon meeting Mr. Gregory, the new director - a lawyer from San Francisco - was introduced. He had just arrived from America and gave us an interesting talk on recent happenings there - says its a tie between Hughes and Wilson. Spent two hours afterwards reading up back correspondence of the C.R.B.

Had supper at Green's in the evening with Brown, Osborne, Jackson, Simpson, Sperry.

Friday. Left for Mons at 8 o'clock with Tuck and Gade. At Mons we had a very interesting meeting of the Comité Provincial. Took lunch in town with Gade - tea afterwards at Hupertgen's. Lieut. Willis came to the office the middle of the afternoon, and there met Tuck and Gade.

The requisition of men is now commencing at Mons. Each day train-loads of men requisitioned by the military authorities pass through the Mons station; the men are often boxed in freight cars and forced to go without food during their transportation for several days at a time.

Mr. Le Duc, Lieut. Willis and I left Mons at 3; stopped en route for eggs at Louze; and reached Tournai at 5. At Ath we saw the damage

done by the allied aviators - last week; three civilians were killed, no harm done to German property.

Worked at the office until 7 o'clock. Took Mlle. Gallas, the stenographer, home as the 5 o'clock rule is in effect.

Mr. De Geynst had supper with us. Rolled in at 9 o'clock to make up for two days previous.

Saturday. Oct. 28 The usual busy Saturday. Another 1,000 refugees announced. With Mr. Castaigne and Mr. Wilmart we outlined a system to provide for the feeding of the 10,000 French who are expected next week.

Spent the morning at the office taking care of requests from the delegates of the local committees. The weekly meeting of the 150 delegates was held at the Excelsior at 11.30. It was a most remarkable gathering - for the patriotic sentiment expressed.

Mr. Duchatelet had lunch with us at Mr. C's. In the afternoon we held the bi-weekly meeting of the inspectors. Busy at the office until 7. After supper Mr. & Mrs. De Geynst - protected by De G's "Wasserwerks" arm-band - came to the house, for an evening of "auction bridge".

Lieut. Willis left this afternoon for his home in Germany to spend a week with his wife and children. In the meanwhile the Count Schmettow is to be my body-guard.

Sunday. Started out on foot at 10 o'clock with Mr. C., Mr. Janson and Mr. Frison for Lamain, 5 m. from Tournai. There we had dinner with Mr. Lefebvre, the bouronmaster and wealthiest farmer in the region. It was a typical farm Thanksgiving dinner garnished with the vintage of '88, rare '65, and well-aged champagnes. Mr. Lefebvre, 65 years old, but very young in spirits, accompanied us nearly all the way home - and insisted that we rest a moment at each Inn we passed en route. As a result we just reached home at 5 o'clock - the retiring hour. Dr. Lens dropped in for a while during the evening. The cannonade during the afternoon and evening in the direction of Argentieres was very heavy.

Monday. Oct. 31. The day passed like an hour. Spent the morning and afternoon at the office writing reports for Mons and Brussels, and taking care of various inquiries. Since the establishment of the new étappen regime there are a steady stream of people at the office each day.

Called on Lieut Pick late in the afternoon to make arrangements for the feeding of the French refugees. After supper I went out to Mr. Crunelle's for a French lesson. The cannons continue as strong as ever this evening.

/The town

The town has paid its fine of 250,000 francs, but will not give the list of chomeurs (those out of work) to the military authorities under any circumstances. This costs the town a penalty of 25,000 francs per day. The situation throughout the whole region is very serious. All the villages have refused to give the lists of chomeurs, and if these are not forthcoming, the authorities threaten to requisition all men between 17 and 30. The rumours even run that women are to be taken too (the lists have been asked for) and that the Ravitaillement will be suppressed. These are hardly to be believed, but they together with other rumours keep the air surcharged with excitement. Saturday three more échevins of Tournai were deported into Germany, and Mr. Castaigne has his grip always packed with winter clothes in order to be ready for the emergency.

Tuesday. Oct. 31st. Spent the morning at the office. Went to Ath in the afternoon on my new German railway pass. Spent two hours there with Mr. Blannailland straightening out a question of yeast; afterwards visited the magasins and installations of the Comité Regional of Ath. On returning to Tournai at 5 o'clock I met Leach on the same train. On reaching the house, found Capt. Schroeder and Count Von Gersky (head of the Ravitaillement in Northern France) in conference with Mr. C. We talked over the situation; in a short time the killing of cattle in the étapes is to be restricted or entirely stopped. Meat is to be replaced by American bacon and lard, if the English are willing.

Spent the evening, reading.

Wednesday. Nov, 1st. "Toussaints". A religious holiday. Broke all past records by sleeping straight through till 8.15 a.m. Spent the morning at the office. Mr. Bradfer the new inspector received his appointment and instructions. Mr. Defosse, our best inspector, has been promoted to the newly-made office of cashier.

Mr. Castaigne gave me a finely made "emblem" of Tournai in silver. After lunch, Mr. Janson, Mr. C., Leach and I started out on a walk to Froidmont. Passed the "field of manoeuvres" where five hundred German soldiers were making practice trenches, practising the throwing of hand grenades, and trying out various formations. At Froidmont we spent an hour visiting the Institute for Feeble-Minded, of which Mr. Castaigne is a Director. Afterwards we had coffee at a nearby farm and returned to Tournai on foot - a round of 9 miles for the afternoon.

Leach had supper with us. As a delicacy Mr. Castaigne bought 7 oz. of Dutch cheese at \$1.60 the lb; and I purchased a regulation 15 g can of sardines for \$0.90. Eggs are now \$1.50 per dozen, butter \$1.20 per lb.

After supper we played Auction with Mr. & Mrs. De Caynst, who spent the evening at Mr. C's.

Thursday. "Jour des Morts". Another holiday, the Belgian

/ "Décoration.

"Decoration Day" - everyone takes flowers to the cemetery on this occasion, and the churchbells ring steadily all day. Celebrated the day by being at the office and on the road from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. The first trainload of French refugees arrived this morning, necessitating immediate arrangements to provide for their food.

Arranged loans for four villages this morning with the Count Schmettve and Von Hammacher; the Commissionaire Civile.

Mr. Janson had planned to give us a picnic at Montreuil-au-Bois, but on account of rainy weather we held it in Mr. Castaigne's dining-room. Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. & Mrs. De Geyst, and the two boys were there.

Spent the afternoon at the office. Had supper at De Geyst's, and we played Auction afterwards until 9 o'clock, at which hour all good folks must now be at home.

Friday, Nov. 3 At the office until 9 o'clock. Started for Lille at 9.10 with Captain Bahr and Leach, in the captain's military gray Benz. At the French frontier we were stopped for several seconds before passing the étappen-line. Once beyond the line the country presented an entirely different aspect. The inhabitants - deprived of meat, butter, etc. altogether for over a year - present a very forlorn, haggard appearance. We saw very few men; the towns passed by, though containing somewhat near their former population, seemed entirely dead. The ploughing in the fields was being done by German soldiers and the farming teams which we passed en route were driven by soldiers. Lille is one of the most extended and most intensive manufacturing districts (woollen mills, etc.) in France and with all this industry stopped the consequent suffering is great.

Passing through the surrounding fortifications of the town we went directly to the office of the Comité Français. There met Mr. Labbé, the President, who took up several matters - including the difficult question of rye flour, and the giving of a small Christmas present (a little cake) to each of the 80,000 children in the region under 10 years of age.

Afterwards Capt. Bahr, Mr. Labbé, Leach and I went to the Pasteur Institute at Lille where we met the famous Dr. Calmett. He showed us through the institution - and explained the method of procuring the different serums. The only animals (used for this purpose) which are left now are a small connection of guinea pigs, and a few horses. The Institute has done wonderful work in helping to preserve the health of the town. This spring when the city water was contaminated by the soldiers' trenches, 1300 cases of typhoid were produced. Every inhabitant in the town was immediately vaccinated, and the epidemic thus checked. At present, due to lack of nourishment, tuberculosis is the most serious problem of the city - out of a population of 125,000 4,000 already have this malady. The larger part of the windows of the Institute were broken and in some cases the walls were damaged by the spontaneous explosion of the German Munition Depot in December, 1915. The explosion killed and injured several hundred people, and broke every window within two miles.

/Leaving

Leaving the Doctor and Mr. Labbé we went on to the Grande Place. Leach and I were given a half hour's freedom. Visited the young lady at the Galerie Lilleois, who is the friend of all the American delegates at Lille. Afterwards took a walk past the beautiful theatre, which has lately been the target of the English guns because of the number of German officers who go there in the evening. It has not yet been struck, but we saw where the English shells fell two weeks ago, not over 400 feet from the theatre. Saw the exterior of the other fine public buildings, most of which fortunately escaped the German bombardment in 1914. Other sections of the town - nearly a thousand buildings and houses in all - some quite near the Place have been completely destroyed by cannonade. At noon we saw the military review at the Place. Left then for Tournai; made the trip of 27 km. in 30 minutes.

After lunch Mr. Castaigne and I took a walk which led us to the School of St. Luke - a most remarkable establishment for instruction in the fine arts of designing, modelling and printing. We saw etchings being made on stones, and printed by the old-fashioned but very effective system of lithography. Two or three hundred young men are working in the various departments. The courses require eight years of study and practical application.

Busy at the office from 3 to 7. Lieut. Willis returned from Germany today. Had supper with Mr. C., Mr. J. and Mr. Carbonelle at Madame Iroquet's. Spent a part of the evening looking over a collection of U.S. postals - including several familiar scenes from Denver.

Saturday. Nov. 4. Spent the first part of the morning at the office chiefly in mapping out plans for the financial system and book-keeping necessary in connection with feeding the French refugees. At 10.30 Lieut. Willis, Count Schmettove and I set out for Brussels in the machine. At Brussels, had lunch at the C.R.B. offices, and spent the afternoon taking up matters with the different departments. Mr. Hocver here now, and announces that next month we will have the much needed soap at Tournai. Coffee will follow later. Made a visit to the U.S. Embassy for a few minutes late in the afternoon.

Had supper at the Tavernes Royale, and afterwards took a long walk through the business and shopping part of town. The stores are all brilliantly lighted, business is fairly active - the stocks seem to be large - but prices are out of sight.

Sunday. Nov. 5. Willis, Schmettove and I started out in the machine from the Palace Hotel at 10 o'clock for Ghent. On leaving Brussels we passed by the large national aviation field - now used by the German authorities - and a big Zeppelin hangar.

Following the route by Assche we reached Hekelgem. This is the dividing line of the Flanders étappen - marked by a large stone which originally indicated the boundary of the East Flanders. Passing by

/the étappen

the étappen sentries, we traversed Alost - a town of 35,000 - with a beautiful cathedral-town showing signs of fire and bombardment.

Just before reaching Melle we passed a village which had been practically reduced to the ground by cannonade and fire. One wall of a certain house, still standing, was a most remarkable example of mitrailleuse (machine-gun) "pepper". The house had probably been a Belgian stronghold; the wall showed several thousand holes made by machine gun bullets.

Reaching Ghent at 11.30 we stopped in for a few minutes to see the C.R.B. delegate, Mr. Dangerfield. The Flanders étappen is so strictly closed for military purposes that he was surprised to find us in the almost forbidden city of Ghent. His region extends as far as the Belgian-French front. He reports things along the Belgian front (the Ypres river) to be so quiet that the farmers cultivate their land almost to the line of German trenches.

The German band was playing at the Place d'Armes in front of the office - unlike the sentiment existing in other parts of the country Belgians were promenading and enjoying the music as well as soldiers and officers. The town is filled with men in uniform.

We had dinner together at a "military" restaurant - the hotels and restaurants of the town being divided into classes for military persons and for civilians. Enjoyed the luxury of some oysters from the port of Ostende, nearby. Prices for food are very high - for a simple lunch for the three of us we paid \$5.

Afterwards we made a tour of the town in the machine, visiting the magnificent cathedral of St. Bavon, the Town Hall with its curious mixed architecture, the mediaeval castle, the quaint old houses bordering along the river. Returning to the office we met Captain Schroeder, and then left for Tournai at 3 o'clock.

Taking the route by Cudenarde we passed through the beautiful Flemish country - now large stretches of green pasture and sprouting winter wheat. The Town Hall with its remarkable architecture and the Church with its tower standing above all the surrounding country are the most interesting points at Cudenarde.

Just before reaching Renaix we passed the extensive inland trenches recently constructed by the Germans to serve as a place for a second stand. They are very carefully made - three or four zig-zag lines one behind the other - and lined with wood. Descending into Renaix from the top of a steep hill which gave us an excellent panorama of the town we entered the commune. The town has a large number of troops and officers.

Continuing on our way we crossed from the Flanders into the Tournai étappen at Wattribont. Reached Tournai at 5 o'clock. Had dinner in the evening at Mrs. Lambert's with Mr. C., Mr. J. Mr. & Mrs. De Ceynst. Afterwards read and wrote at the office until 12.30.

/Monday

Monday, Nov. 6 Spent the morning at the office. Several of the French refugees, coming from the different villages where they are now quartered, called and told us a number of interesting facts about their life in the villages under fire.

Busy at the office all afternoon. Made a round of German offices with Lieut. Willis to take care of different matters.

Mr. C. Mr. J. and I had dinner at Kain with Mr. & Mme. Tornelier. Mr. T. is pianist to the Belgian court.

Tuesday, Nov. 7 Made a report on the milk situation for infants in the Tournai region, and saw the Commandant with Willis to preserve from requisition the cows furnishing milk for the 600 children of the district.

Started for Espierres with Willis in the machine. This is the dividing point between the Flanders and Tournai étappens, where the ravitaillement boats en route to France and the Hesbain pass under German inspection. We succeeded in releasing a C.R.B. boat, whose owner put one of the German soldiers out of commission in a row last week. The owner himself will have to serve a sentence of two months.

From Espierres we went on to Courtrai through the beautiful farming country of the Flanders. At Courtrai we had lunch at the officers' quarters. Afterwards took a walk through the town which is about the same size, but not so interesting as Tournai. Returned the 20 miles to Tournai through a driving rain.

Spent the rest of the afternoon at the office. After supper spent the evening at De Geynst's.

Wednesday. At the office nearly all day until 7 p.m. - taken up with matters of refugees, organization of a system of coal transportation, etc. The day passes like an hour.

Leach had supper with us in the evening, with waffles like "father" used to make. De Geynst's stopped in later.

Thursday, Nov. 9 Busy at the office all day. Lieut. Willis returned from Brussels at 3 o'clock. We went together in the machine to Antoing to look after several boats, which the C.R.B. is to rent for transporting coal. Afterwards went to Rangines-Chin, where we made arrangements with the Commander to provide one meal a day to the 500 French prisoners stationed there. Rice, flour, etc. is to be furnished to the sisters of a nearby convent - and they will prepare a noon meal for the men. Returned to Tournai by moonlight - almost as clear as day.

Visited several friends in the evening with Mr. Castaigne. Back to the office - worked until 11.30.

Friday. Rose early and took the usual cold shower. Mr. C.,

/Willis

Willis and I started in the machine for Mons at 8.30 - a beautiful crisp morning. Interesting meeting of the Provincial Committee at Mons. It was announced that the 50,000 men employed by the Ravitaillement in the "Gouvernement General" would receive cards from the C.R.B. exempting them from requisition for military works.

Had lunch at Haeptgen's. Afterwards a talk with Mr. C., Tuck, and Mr. De Munck. Left Mons in the machine at 3.30 - stopped at Ath and Leuze on the way to pick up provisionments of eggs. The price is down to \$1.10 the dozen now. In the étappen - at Tournai - it is \$1.60 per dozen at present. Starting in next week we are to be rationed 3 oz. per meat a week - and hence accumulate a small stock of eggs to help along.

Worked at the office till 7. Spent the evening with Mr. C. and Mr. Janson - who just returned from Brussels - at Mrs. De Coynst's.

Saturday. A very busy morning. Made a round of a number of offices with Willis. The bi-weekly meeting of the delegates of the communes at 11.30. Made my first speech in French to the 150 present, after which Mr. Janson obligingly repeated the same so that the audience might understand it. After a hasty lunch with the Count de Leunoy, Mr. Duchatelet, et Mr. de la Croix d'Agunout, I left for Brussels on the 1.30 train. Took up the question of the refugees and the feeding of the French prisoners with Mr. Hoover. Made two reports.

In the evening a farewell dinner was given to Mr. Kellogg at Gray's. The whole Belgian family of the C.R.B. - 43 men - were present. Mr. Hoover gave a short but very fine speech, alluding in a humorous way to the repartée he had had with Mr. Francqui, president of the Belgian Committee during the past difficult week. Returned to Tournai by the 10 o'clock train which was an hour late in leaving Brussels and 1 1/2 hours late on reaching Tournai. The "Nord" Station at Brussels is a scene of great military activity. The Berlin-Tournai-Lille "special", a heavy train of fifteen cars, pulls in at 11 p.m. under the steam of two of the big German locomotives. Four or five hundred soldiers returning to the front with knapsacks, gas masks, and their complete outfits on their backs descend from the train - followed by a smaller number of officers, always trim and finely built. In the button-hole of the coat of nearly each one is his distinctive ribbon of honour - the "iron cross" ranking first. The place of the descending soldiers is taken by an equally large number going on to Tournai and Lille. My R.E. pass is good for 1st class so that I often find myself in the company of a general or some equally important personage.

Sunday, Nov. 12th Slept till 10 o'clock. After breakfast spent a short while reading at the office. Mr. J., Mr. C. and I had lunch early and set out for Antoin. It was a fine November day, and the country with its varied tints was never more beautiful. We passed by a number of old chateaux on the way, all magnificently situated.

At Antoin we found the 280 refugees - types of all sorts - gathered around long tables in a large hall where they had just finished

/dinner

dinner. Mr. Janson gave a short speech of assurance, which started words from several of the French present - and we finally left the room in a semi-upset state. The French refugees demand their "coffee" and 1 franc. a day. As the former is now \$2.00 a pound, and England is unwilling to let us import it into the Tournai étappen - it will be necessary to get along without this luxury for a while. The President of the C.L. took us to his home and opened a bottle of champagne. Mr. C., as well as I, is on the W.W. now.

From Antoing went via Bruyelles and Jollain to Wez-Felvain.

Spent a pleasant hour there with the two Counts de Chastel, the Countess, and the Princess de Croy. They are very hospitable people, speaking English well as German and most of the other modern tongues. The father, an elderly man, had been in the diplomatic circles of all the countries of Europe - and has now settled down on a beautiful estate, as burgomaster of his little village.

Returning the 5 mi. to Tournai on foot, we incidentally worked up an appetite, which was satisfied by a luxurious supper of two eggs a piece and two loaves of "white" bread purchased specially for the occasion. Spent the evening at Crunelle's.

Monday. Spent nearly the whole day at the office. Made a round with Willis in the morning. We selected the house where we are to live and are having the electric current installed.

Leach ret'd from Brussels in the afternoon. He also came to the house after supper and we spent the evening with Mrs. Lambert, and Mr. & Mrs. De Geynst.

Tuesday. Lieut. Willis told me this a.m. that I could continue to stay at Mr. Castaigne's. He, Mr. J. and Mr. C. made a trip in the machine in the morning to straighten out a refractory commune which had not given a satisfactory welcome to the refugees.

At the office all day. After supper Mr. C. and I took a walk - visiting Judge Winkelman and winding up at De Coynst's. Were stopped on the way home for being out after 9 o'clock by a German gendarme who finally let us go.

Wednesday. Busy at the office all day. An engineer of the communes at Leus, who is among the refugees, told us the story of their 7 months living in the cellars at Leus. Communications were made between the houses and with an extensive system of underground trenches - used by soldiers and inhabitants alike - they lived in a subterranean city.

Went to Mount St. Aubert with Willis late in the afternoon. Returned for dinner at Mrs. Brocquet's.

Thursday, Nov. 16. Left for Brussels on the 9 a.m. train. With a bad engine we were 5 hours in making the trip which usually

requires 2 hours. Found a fine picture of Teddy and Ann in my box at Brussels. Spent the afternoon at the office - attended meeting of the head delegates. Tournai's food portion - for imported goods - is to be increased 25%. Our free "Soupes" are to have an advantage of 50%. Coffee and soap - the two most sought-after articles - are to arrive next month.

Went out to tea at Mlle. Fiset's with Richardson. Stopped in for a few minutes afterwards at Branfaute. In the evening saw the Moliere Players.

Friday. Went to Mons in auto with Cade, against a cold cutting wind all the way. The town is rather downcast today. Yesterday its 7,200 men were marched en masse to a point outside of the town - and 680 were designated as workmen for the authorities. Tuck and Cade did their best to save the 175 men connected with the Ravitaillement, but lost 12.

Had dinner at Huestgen's. Miss H. just returned from a 4 weeks stay at Liege. Returned to Brussels in the afternoon with Cade. Had supper at Mrs. Turner's. De Cruchy and I went to the Moliere where "Antoinette" was very well produced.

Saturday. Spent a part of the morning at the C.R.B. Brussels dock office - where the food barges which come from Holland by canal are discharged. At the C.R.B. offices most of the afternoon. Williams, Thwaite and I had supper together. Afterwards, Mrs. and I saw the "Veuve Joyeuse" with Angele Van Loo.

Sunday. Brussels is very much stirred over the requisitions of Belgian workmen which is to commence here tomorrow morning.

The burgomasters of the communes making up the town are closely guarded and cannot leave their communes. Revolutionary pamphlets are being circulated, but the calm level-headed people hope to avoid any such measures.

Spent the morning at the C.R.B. Brussels office. Took the afternoon train to Tournai. Spent the evening at De Ceynst's. Picture of Teddy and Ann hailed here, as well as elsewhere, with great interest.

Monday. Busy at the office all day long. Rented three boats this morning for our coal service - after driving a bargain with Father Placquet of Péronnes. Spent the evening reading up past documents of the war - chiefly the copies of the Tournai paper published at the beginning of the war.

The local newspaper was published without interruption through the 21st of August, when the German forces entered Tournai. It was then suppressed for a week. On the departure of the Germans - who continued their advance to Paris - the paper again started and continued until

/October

October 1st. At this time the town was definitely taken over by the German authorities, and the papers permanently suppressed. All the newspapers now published in Belgium are under German censure and edition, - and consequently relate only the news and the views reflected by the occupying authorities.

Tuesday, Nov. 21. Morning spent at the office. Went with Madame Dumon, President of the Milk Organization for the Children of the region, to explain to Lieut. Willis the plan of exempting from requisition the cows furnishing children's milk.

Eckstein, the new delegate to replace Dr. Leach at Lille, arrived today. Had dinner with Mr. C., Mr. J. and Mr. Marcelle Carbonelle at Victor Carbonelle's. Returned to the office at 9 and wrote until 10.30.

Wednesday. Worked until 11 a.m. Mr. C., Mr. J., Mr. Le Duc and I went to Velaines. Had dinner and spent a very interesting afternoon at the country house of Mr. de la Croix d'Agimont. We are now reduced to a meat ration of 100 g. - enough for one meal per week. The dinner was consequently - chicken, rabbit, pheasant. Our hosts are one of the oldest families in Belgium - the presence of the Count de Launoy also toned up the gathering. The house is surrounded by a beautiful grounds of 25 acres - as we made a tour of the property, wild pheasants, which are in abundance here, started up several times. The d'Agimonts lost their winter home and chateau at Louvain, a loss of 700,000 francs. They have a son at the front. Their house is surcharged with patriotism, Belgian and American colours everywhere, and a dozen of the American flour sacks embroidered and done into various forms by Mlle.

Returning we made 3 1/2 miles on foot, rested an hour at an inn and took the train to Tournai. Eckstein and Leach dropped in for supper and spent the evening at Mr. C's with Mrs. Lambert and the De Geynst's.

Thursday, Nov. 23. Spent the morning at the office. Left for Brussels on the 1.20 train. The station was filled with soldiers who descended momentarily from a troop train bound for Lille. As their train of 30 cars pulled - with men cheering and whistling - one could not help but think how many would come back over that same road.

Spent a busy afternoon at the C.R.B. offices at Brussels. Found letters from mother, father, and Ann. Had supper in the evening with Osborne, Brown, Simpson and Richardson. Brussels is a rather dull place at present. Because of patriotic celebrations at St. Gudule and the other churches, and affronts to German soldiers made on the occasion of King Albert's birthday - November 15th - all stores in Brussels must be closed at 7, and everyone in his house at 7.30. During the evening two Zeppelins, which we could plainly hear but not see on account of the darkness, passed low over the town.

Friday. Made up a Christmas package to send home.

/Straightened

-4-

Straightened out several matters at the Brussels office. After lunch I left for Tournai on the 3 o'clock train. Came down with Mr. Jauret of Flobecq and the Baron du Sart of Grandmetz.

Took a French lesson at Mr. Crunelle's in the evening. Returned to the office until 11.30.

Saturday. Day of our bi-weekly meeting of the C.L. delegates. All were very enthusiastic over the news of the arrival of 50,000 lbs. of coffee (now \$2 a pound on the market) at 20 ¢ a pound, and 50,000 lbs. of soap.

Mr. Demunck came over from Mons to take up several matters, and had lunch with us. Meeting of the inspectors in the afternoon. Busy at the office until 7 o'clock. Spent the evening reading the "Conventions of the Hague."

Sunday. The German victories in Roumania are the talk of the moment. Cannonading along the Somme and Lille fronts very heavy all last night. Spent the day writing and reading. Afternoon with Willis.

Monday. Spent the morning at the office. In the afternoon, Lieut. Willis, the Count Schmettes and I made a trip. Visited the interesting castle at Antoing - formerly the home of the Prince de Ligne, and now a religious school. Afterwards went to Fontenoy - the scene of the battle between the English and the French - Irish in . . . Continued on to Throulain to investigate complaints of treatment given the French refugees.

At Fopuelles we stopped a few minutes at Mr. Defontaine's home. Visited the commandant at Velaines, and then returned to Tournai.

Mr. & Mrs. De Gynst dropped in during the evening for an hour.

Tuesday. November 29th. Left Tournai in the machine at 8.30 - a wet foggy morning. Went to Roubaix (France) with Lieut. Willis, and there visited the Mayor and the President of the Ravitaillement. They have the most model store I have seen, for the distribution of the American products. Continued on through Tourcoing - a dreary, closely populated, manufacturing district (whose present industries are all stopped) to Verwick. Through this region the farming and all general work is done by German soldiers who superintend French workmen.

Verwick, situated 6 miles from the front, was filled with soldiers and officers - men mostly in temporary retirement from the trenches. We met several officers who spoke English and told different interesting stories. One, just back from the Perennes-Bapaume front, where the big English offensive has been taking place had been an observer on a tall steeples-chimney a part of which was shot away by an English shell.

Lieut. Willis' cousin who arrived from a trip to the front

/at noon

at noon reported things as quiet except for machine-gun fire. He invited us to luncheon at the German officers' quarters. Verwick is visited regularly by the allied aviators who try to destroy the bridges along the River Lys. Fortunately the weather was very foggy so that the town was not favoured with a visit while we were there. In case of bombardment or aerial attack, the soldiers and inhabitants take to the basements. At the door of each house having a "cave" is a small red flag and a sign indicating the number of people it can contain.

Willis' cousin returned with us to Tournai in the machine. Spent the afternoon on different matters at the office. Leach and Eckstein had supper with us at Mr. C's - and we all went to De Geynst's to spend the evening.

Wednesday. Busy at the office all day. Late in the afternoon Mr. Defossez brought in 17,000 francs in "bons" (paper money) exchanged for the French refugees. I picked out a number of interesting varieties. Came back to the office after supper to finish reports for Brussels - worked till 11.

Thursday.. Thanksgiving Day. Nov. 30. Went to Brussels in the machine in the morning with Eckstein and Lieut. Willis. The Hainaut group - Masson, De Munck, Hueppens, and the delegates - had their picture taken together at Bouts's. Afterwards we had lunch at the Taverne Royale.

Spent the afternoon arranging different matters at the C.R.B. office. In the evening, as Tuck's guests we had a big Hainaut dinner at the home of Mr. Gregory, the director. Mr. Castaigne was on hand, having obtained a passport to come to Brussels; I took him and two other Belgian gentlemen home afterwards in a machine, on account of the 7.30 closing rule now in force in Brussels.

Friday. To Mons on the 8 o'clock train with Gregory and Mr. Hueppens. Not being able to take part in the meeting of the Provincial Committee at Mons - after an order just received - I spent the morning at the establishment which keeps the records of all the Belgian soldiers at the Hainaut at the front, wounded, or transported in Germany as prisoners. Was shown the system from beginning to end - the preparation of the packets of food and clothing sent to the prisoners in Germany, the card-index systems, etc. At present they figure that there are 40,000 Belgians, prisoners of war, in Germany, 33,000 in Holland; 17,000 lost at the front; and 250,000 now in the active forces. The offices had on the side the most complete exhibition of American flour sacks - 800 varieties - in Belgium, including several kinds from Colo. - one even mentioning the News-Times fund. Left 25 francs of father's fund to send packets to soldiers who had no relatives to help them.

Lunch at Hueppens. Spent the afternoon at the Mons office. Late in the afternoon, Gregory, Cade and I returned to Brussels in the machine. Had supper with Green and Jackson, and spent the evening with Jackson.

Saturday. Spent the morning at the Brussels C.R.B. office.

Went to Antwerp in the afternoon and after stopping a few hours in town went on to Mr. Bunge's home at Hop Boom where I had been invited to spend Sunday. Found Doc. Leach there and met the three Misses Bunge, Miss and Mr. Marcher and Mr. Bunge. The Bunge's keep steady open house for the Americans - they have a beautiful country home with elevator and plentiful accommodations. The house overlooks a beautiful little lake and is surrounded by 150 acres of woods and farming lands. The property is near the Dutch frontier and one side is completely occupied by trenches constructed at the beginning of the war and now occupied by the Germans.

We spent a quiet and interesting evening together. The family, thought of the wealthiest in Belgium, are the most simple and hospitable people you would want to meet. We tried out the girls on the "experience des cheveux", and it worked to perfection. Played my first game of billiards with Mr. Bunge against Doc. Leach and Miss Bunge, which we won.

Sunday. Had a late breakfast. The younger folks all started out on foot at 10 o'clock for a picnic at Calixberg, a second home of Mr. Bunge's, 12 km. away. We made part of the way on foot, the rest on tram - passing Mr. E's famous stables of the 100 cows imported from Holland. These were brought in by Mr. Bunge to furnish free milk for the poor children and for the hospitals of Antwerp.

Had a fine lunch at Calixberg; afterwards Mr. B. showed us through the home. He has a room filled with collections from the Belgian Congo, where he has large rubber holdings.

Returned to Hop Boom by tram. During the evening Doc. L. and I pulled off several of our combination tricks learned at Tournai.

Monday. Up at 6 a.m. After an early breakfast and saying good-bye to the girls, I left for Antwerp in the machine with Mr. Bunge. We continued on to Brussels by train. Mr. E. - a millionaire many times over - following the Belgian custom made the trip in a stuffy, packed 3rd class car. We said good-bye at the Gare du Nord.

Spent the morning at the C.R.B. offices. At noon Willis, Cwynn and I had dinner together at the Tavernes Royale. The chief news of interest is the large green posters announcing the German victory in Roumania - and proclaiming the ringing of German bells the night of December 14th throughout Germany. Belgium has also refused to pay the increased war tax of 50,000,000 francs per month, and considerable interest is manifested as to the result of this step.

Lieut. Willis and I started back to Tournai at 2 o'clock. Stopped a few minutes at Hal to visit the interesting old Church. Picked up 12 dozen eggs at Leuze. Reached Tournai at 5 o'clock. Spent the afternoon at the office and returned again after supper until 10 o'clock. Took off a half hour to hear the German Philharmonic Orchestra of Lille. It was really excellent - composed entirely of soldiers, many of whom (with their black and white ribbon) were men back from the trenches.

/Tuesday

Tuesday. Spent the day at the office. Eckstein ret'd from Brussels late in the afternoon. Had supper with us, and afterwards he, Mr. C., Mr. Janson and I played "Auction".

Wednesday. Dec. 6 This is St. Nicholas Day - the day of Santa Claus (who according to their tradition comes on a donkey) for Belgian children. Was very busy at the office all day long, working out principally the details of the distribution of the 1 1/2 million dollar monthly import of gift food to be used for free meals.

To celebrate St. Nicholas Day each boy and girl in the region received a roll - "Coque de Noël" - made of white flour. In the evening I spent an hour at Crunelle's.

Bucharest is captured! This is the most sensational war news since several months. The German soldiers on receipt of the news at 8 o'clock this evening overcome with joy rang the bells of the Tournai Cathedral and of all the other churches for an hour.

Thursday. Took the 9 a.m. train to Brussels. Spent the afternoon at meetings and C.R.B. office. Had dinner at Mrs. Turner's. De Gruchy and I took a long walk through town afterward - the streets of Brussels, still under the 7.30 ban, were entirely deserted except for Belgian gendarmes and German soldiers. Stopped in later in the evening at a friend's of De Gruchy, and heard some very good cello music.

Friday. Dec. 8th. Started for Mons from Brussels in the Overland with Gregory at 7.45. We set the pace for Tuck and Gade in the new "Pipe" all the way.

At Mons attended meeting of "Soupes" Committee, had lunch with the Provincial Committee given by Mr. De Munck, spent the afternoon at the C.R.B. offices, and left for Tournai by the 6 o'clock train. Had tea at Huesypgens.

Reached Tournai at 7.40. After supper, spent the evening at the office.

Saturday. A busy day. Meeting of Regional Committee in the morning - Mr. Wilmart and Mr. Defontaines had dinner with us. Occupied all afternoon with the question of the "Soupes" - meeting of "Soupes" Committee and afterwards of regional inspectors.

Went to De Geynst's for the evening.

Sunday. Spent nearly the whole day writing - work on the "Delegates Guide". Had supper and spent the evening at De Geynst's. Went to Froyennes in the morning for children's Christmas "Exercises".

Monday. I start in this morning a 6 days trial of the food

which

which is furnished to the poor by the C.R.B. The allowance for the week is: 5lbs. bread, 1/2 lb. rice, 1/4 lb. peas, 1/4 lb. beans, 1/4 lb. lard, 1/4 lb. bacon. To this is added 3 oz. of meat for the week, free soup each noon from the "Soupe Populaire" and a daily mid-day vegetable dish, costing 3 ¢. The "Secours" (public aid) gives 50 ¢ for the six days and bread free. Of this I use 20 ¢ to pay for the C.R.B. goods, 4 ¢ to buy 4 lbs. of potatoes, 20 ¢ for a large jar of jam, leaving 6 ¢ for miscellaneous expenses.

Having enjoyed the best that Belgian hospitality up to this time could afford - which is somewhat better than one is used to even in America - I decided to make this test in order to be able to judge at first hand whether the more destitute of the population actually receive enough to sustain them.

First day's menu:

Breakfast - grey bread and jelly.

Lunch - Soup, and a dish of rice prepared with 1/2 oz. of bacon. Bread.

Supper - Bread. A warm dish of rice and potatoes.

Went to Crunelle's for the evening. Mr. Crunelle and I visited a friend who was in close touch with the 500 Russian prisoners who had just arrived and are working on the railroad. Contrary to false stories which run through the town, the men are well treated, and their food (while perhaps not sufficient) is of exactly the same quality and quantity as that served to the German soldiers who are with them.

Tuesday. Busy at the office all day. Lieut. Willis just got back from Zebugge where he has made an undersea trip in a submarine. In the evening Willis, the Count Schmettove and I went to see the Vienna "Ballet" at the Tournai Opera House. The house was packed with soldiers and officers - bill fairly good. Lieut. Willis has just received the news of the Kaiser's offer to discuss peace - one of the most interesting moments of the war to date. Stopped in at De Geynst's on the way home to tell them the news, and spent an hour there.

Wednesday. At the office all day. Eckstein arrived from Brussels in the morning. The question of milk for the children of Tournai we have finally been able to accomplish with the German authorities.

Eckstein had supper with us in the evening, after which we adjourned to De Geynst's for an hour of "Auction". Returned to the office and wrote until 11. All going well on the third day of the food try-out.

Thursday. December 14th Busy at the office all day. A lively meeting of the Regional Delegates over the question of "Soupe Populaires". After supper, Eckstein, Mr. C., and I went to the Cinema (moving pictures).

Friday. At the office until 7 p.m. Mr. Castaigne and I spent the evening at De Geynst's.

/Saturday

Saturday. In the afternoon Mr. De Geynst took me to see the Public Bath Establishment. Afterward we visited the Tournai Theatre where he showed me the system of operation of the electric and scenic effects.

In the evening Mr. & Mrs. De Geynst dropped in for a game of "Auction". Wrote at the office afterwards until 12.

Sunday. December 17. Slept late. Spent the morning writing at the office. Mr. Castaigne and I had lunch at the Cathedral Hotel.

Spent the latter part of the afternoon and had supper at Mme. Lambert's. Mr. C. Mr. J. and the De C. were there.

Monday. Made a tour of communes in the machine with Lieut. Willis during the morning - Bruyelles, Elebaries and Wez. At the last place we met the Count de Chastel who showed us a massive and interesting old coach in which his grandfather had made his wedding trip.

Spent the afternoon and part of the evening at the office.

Tuesday. Made a tour in the machine to Escanaffles and Velaines to look after the French refugees and make arrangements for shipping the "Goutte de Lait" milk to Tournai.

Mr. Janson left for Brussels today, to be done 15 days. The canon along the Lille-Ypres front are beginning to get in action again; firing is heavy every day. There is considerable excitement in the air about the French attack at Verdun, and capture of 10,000 prisoners.

Eckstein ret'd in the afternoon. Marie, Mr. C's servant, being away, Eckstein, Mr. C. and I cooked our own supper - not achieving any remarkable success. De Geynst dropped in and we had a game of Auction. At the office afterwards till 12.

Wednesday. December 20. Arose at 5.30. Took the 6.20 train to Ath with Mr. Wilbart. Had breakfast at his sister's house and then continued on to Mons. Attended the meeting of Inspectors at Mons.

At 10 o'clock Cade, Gregory and I left for Perwez. Had lunch there with Mr. Eugines. I crossed the étappen line on foot, and returned to Tournai by tram.

Eckstein had supper with us and we took a walk afterwards.

Thursday. Dec. 21 (Shortest day in the year). Took the 9 o'clock train to Brussels. Had lunch at the C.R.B. offices, attended the two meetings, and straightened out various questions. Made a round of calls in town late in the afternoon. Had dinner with Guyan at Mrs. Hearst's, and spent the evening there. Because of the scarcity of coal, all cafés and theatres have to be closed and lights out at 9 o'clock.

/Theatres

Theatres start at 6 instead of 8 in the evening. Tuck, the first of the Hainaut delegates, left for England today.

Friday. Went to Mons on the train leaving Brussels at 8 o'clock, and which was 1 1/2 hours late at destination. Met Lieut. Willis after the meeting of the Provincial Committee - invited him and Don C. to lunch. Took tea afterwards at Hueppens. Spent an hour at the Mons office, and then started back for Tournai at 3 o'clock with Lieut. Willis and Mr. Castaigne.

Weather very fine for the month of December - we made the 55 km. in an hour and a half.

Spent the evening at De Geynst's. The cannonade along the Ypres front was very heavy. Toward 10 o'clock, on leaving De G's, we heard the noise of aeroplanes passing over the town in the dark. A second passage of planes took place about 11 o'clock.

Saturday. The usual busy day. Reunion of Regional Delegates in the morning and of the Inspectors in the afternoon. In the morning I went with Mr. De Geynst to the Camp of the Russian Prisoners, stationed at Tournai and working on the railroad. We were very well received by the German officer in charge who showed us through the Camp. The men are all lodged in one large hall, each one with a straw mattress and his woollen blanket. In the kitchen we saw the Russians preparing lunch, three huge kettles of a thick soup. To an old Russian soldier pottering around in the yard, Mr. De G. gave a deck of used playing cards. The old man while unable to express his thanks seemed to be very much pleased with the gift. From general reports the commanding German officer takes the best care possible of his prisoners with the means at his disposal. German soldiers and Russian prisoners sleep and eat under the same conditions.

Late in the afternoon Lieut. Willis and I made a trip to Courain-Ramecroix to investigate the requisition of certain buildings employed by the "Soupes" where the authorities wished to quarter soldiers.

Plans which I had made for a trip to Berlin faded when Willis informed me that I would only be allowed to go, if accompanied. Mr. & Mrs. De G. dropped in to spend the evening.

Sunday. Rose late, and spent the morning writing. The requisition of workmen has started again. At noon a train of four cars filled with civilians arrived from Flandain. As it passed through town the men all waved from the car windows, and sang the "Marseillaise" and "Brabant Song". From the station they were marched to the Caserne. Women kissed their husbands good-bye, and the men started off peacefully with their large packs of food and clothing on their backs. There are now 700 prisoners at the Caserne, and 1000 are to leave Tournai Tuesday morning.

Spent part of the afternoon at De G's. Mr. C. receives the news of Mr. Brocquet's death at Paris - the father of family I know here.

/Wrote at

wrote at the office all evening.

Monday, Dec. 25th. Christmas Day and 6,000 miles from home! Christmas is very little celebrated by the Belgian people. Their St. Nicholas - the 6th of December - corresponds more to our Christmas. For the Germans, however, it is the greatest fete of the year - two days being set aside for its celebration.

My chief gift came in the form of a small loaf of white bread given to each one of the 500 prisoners at the Russian camp as well as to the German soldiers who are with them. Mr. De Geynst and I went to the Camp in the morning and saw the men eating their noon-day porridge of rice and meat. None of the prisoners spoke French, but several who talked German told us that they were now commencing their third year of confinement.

Worked at the office a part of the afternoon. Went to Mt. St. Aubert with Willis, and we had coffee at Mme. Pottisau's. Far from being a Christmas of "Peace on Earth - Good Will to Men", the cannonading throughout the afternoon and evening was unprecedented.

In the evening we had a Christmas dinner at Mr. C's - Mme. Lambert, Mr. & Mrs. De G. present. Played auction afterward.

Tuesday. Busy at the office all day. Cannonading steady and very heavy throughout the day.

Wednesday, December 27. Lieut. Willis and I started for Brussels in the machine at 7.30. Mr. Castaigne rode with us as far as Ath. At Brussels I bade good-bye to Willis who is going home for a week's visit with his family at Liepzig.

Spent the day on different matters at the C.R.B. office and completed the Manual of Information for C.R.B. Representatives.

Went out to see Mr. Janson in the afternoon. Had supper at the house - 18 Marnix, with several of the boys. We spent the evening reading a fresh batch of New York newspapers and magazines which had just arrived at the American Legation.

Thursday. - Attended the meeting of the Comité National in the morning, and there met Mr. Bunge, Mr. Janson and Mr. Branfaut. An appreciation of Mr. Bulle, the C.R.B. Secy. of passports who died yesterday, was read by the V-P of the C.N. At the occasion of the New Year the C.N. thanked the C.R.B. for the work which it has carried on in Belgium up to the present time.

After lunch at the Director's home and the C.R.B. meeting in the

/afternoon

afternoon I went to Hasselt with Maverick in his machine. Had supper there with the family with whom he is staying and we played "Auction" afterwards. Maverick and I dropped in for a few moments on the "Cercle Littéraire" and there met Mr. Castaigne, brother of my friend at Tournai.

Hasselt is a quiet provincial town of 15,000 - chiefly famed in the eyes of the resident C.R.B. delegates for its attractive young ladies. My stay being a short one I did not have time to examine the situation very carefully in this respect.

Friday. Had breakfast with Maverick. I went afterwards to visit Mr. & Mrs. Castaigne. They lost their only son, a boy of 19, at the front two months ago and are very much broken up over the fact. Mr. C. was treasurer of the Province until recently and has the most beautiful home at Hasselt. It is furnished with elegant Persian tapestries and other oriental objects which Mr. Castaigne secured while the representative of the Belgian Government in Persia some years ago. Mr. C. is very genial and hospitable, much like his brother in many ways.

After taking a walk through the town and visiting the C.R.B. offices I returned to Brussels in the afternoon by train, via Landen. Spent the balance of the aft. at the C.R.B. offices. Had supper at the Taverne Royale and went to the "Theatre de la Monnaie" afterwards. The piece was an interesting comedy "The Man who Married a Mute Wife". The theatres now all start at 6 and 6.30. At 9 o'clock all theatres, cafés and stores must be closed. This is done to save use of electricity; coal at the present time being very scarce at Brussels.

Saturday - Went to the Vernutlungstelle with Mr. Gregory (the director and Gray. Mr. Bruhn, the officer in charge, assured us that the changes regarding the Mons military étape would in no way interfere with the work of ravitaillement by the C.R.B. in this district. The horse question was also brought up but not definitely settled. The C.R.B. wishes to buy 2,500 or 3,000 horses to transport food wagons in Belgium, with the understanding that these horses shall be exempt from military requisition.

At 11 o'clock all of the C.R.B. men went to Bulle's funeral. It was a very impressive ceremony attended by all the diplomats at Brussels as well as by the high German officers - since Bulle had been connected with the Mexican embassy. Good-natured and kindly, he was one of the most beloved members of the C.R.B. The apoplectic stroke which caused his death - the first misfortune in Belgium to occur to a C.R.B. man - was a great shock to us all.

Spent a part of the afternoon at the C.R.B. offices. On going to the station to take the 3 o'clock train for Tournai, I learned that the line was under water near Leuze and that all service for the day was stopped. Went to the Palace Hotel for the night.

Sunday. Left Brussels at 7 a.m. for Tournai via the Flanders. On account of heavy rains, the country is under water in many places. I

/took the

took the train to Lille and found there that it would be necessary to return to Monscron, and transfer to Tournai at this point. During two hours wait at Lille I visited the interesting "Place de la Republique" and Saint Sauveur, the section destroyed by the great explosion of 1915.

Reached Tournai via Monscron, at 3.30. Spent a part of the aft. at the office and went afterwards to visit Crunelle's. In the evening Mrs. Lambert, Mr. & Mrs. De Ceynst came for supper and we played "Auction".

At 11 o'clock Belgian time, (12 o'clock German time) the Germans greeted the new year 1917 with noisy salutes. It is now 12.30 and the new year is well under way. May 1917 see the dawning of Peace!

Monday. January 1st, 1917. Spent a part of the morning at the office and exchanged New Year's greetings all around. At 10 o'clock Mr. De Ceynst came to get me and we went together to the "Faubourg Morelle", a section of the town now completely under water on account of the heavy rains. All the inhabitants of the quarter are living on their second stories. They receive bread and coal by means of boats which navigate through the streets.

Mr. De Ceynst and I took one of the boats, Mr. De G. as town engineer being in charge of the work, and made an interesting tour. Incidentally we carried a loaf of bread and jar of water to an old lady who was isolated in a little house in the middle of the flood.

We had New Year's dinner at De Ceynst's. Mrs. Lambert and Mr. Castaigne being present. Afterwards we started out for a walk. "Gyp", the fine collie of De G's at an inopportune moment fell into the canal and was trapped between the cement side-wall and a boat anchored in the canal. In fishing him out I somewhat bedraggled my new overcoat but earned the gratitude of Guy and Pierre.

We returned for waffle supper at De Ceynst's and then went to the Cinéma. Spent the evening at the office afterwards.

January. 2nd Tuesday. Busy at the office all day. In the afternoon Mr. C. and I had our picture taken together. Visited several friends in the evening. I returned to the office and worked until 12.30.

Wednesday. January 3rd. The answer of the Allied Governments to the Peace Note arrived this morning. Indications are that the War will continue for some time to come. Everyone though, Germans and Belgians alike, is convinced that peace will be declared before next winter. A soldier under orders to return again to the front, committed suicide on the street yesterday.

Worked at the office all morning. Went to Mons in the afternoon, stopping off a few minutes on the way to see Mr. Baugines at Peruwelz. Spent the latter part of the afternoon at the C.R.B. office in Mons.

Had dinner and spent a most delightful evening at Wleyptgen's.

/s/ M. & Mlle.

Mrs. & Miss. Huetgen are dressing a Belgian doll, which Mr. Gade is to take home to his little girl.

Thursday. Took the morning train to Brussels. A dinner in honour of the American Minister, Mr. Whitlock, was given at the C.R.B. offices. Following this the minister gave us a little talk. Spent the afternoon at the C.R.B. offices.

Had dinner in the evening with Green, Wickes, Brown, Hueber, Osborn.

Friday. At the C.R.B. Brussels offices all morning. In the afternoon Lieut. Willis and I went back to Tournai in the machine.

Saturday. The usual busy day of the Regional meeting. Mr. Duchatelet, who lost his wife several weeks ago, came to Tournai for the first time and had lunch with us.

Meeting of the inspectors in the afternoon. De Geynst's dropped in for the evening. Returned to the office afterwards where I read until 1 o'clock.

Sunday. Rose very late. Spent the afternoon at the office correcting proofs of the "Delegate's Manual". Mr. Castaigne left for a two days' visit at Brussels.

Mr. Janson and I had supper and spent the evening at De Geynst's. The latest German proclamation states that all copper, brass, and pewter must be declared for surrender to the authorities. Kitchen utensils, bronze door plates, brass knobs, and carpet fastenings are included.

Monday, Jan. 8. Left Tournai with Lieut. Willis in the machine. We made a tour of the Mons étape visiting the commandants at Jurbise, Mons, and St. Chislain. Met Mr. De Munck, Gade and others at Mons. Willis and I had lunch at Fay's and then continued to Valenciennes via the coal region of the Borinage.

While Lieut. Willis was engaged in taking up matters with the military authorities I visited the office of the American delegate and afterwards picked up a few pieces of fine Valenciennes lace. We returned to Tournai by machine after dark.

Tuesday. Took Mr. Castaigne to Escanaffles where he was to attend a wedding. On the point of starting the buttons took a notion to burst on his dress-suit vest and in the resulting delay, Lieut. Willis became somewhat peeved.

While at Escanaffles, one of our recalcitrant communes, I went to see the burgomaster and laid down an ultimatum for the conduct to be followed by the Local Food Committee.

Eisy at the office all afternoon. Mr. Castaigne returned from

/the

the wedding dinner late in the evening. The meal consisted of 16 courses with 9 different kinds of meat - including lobster and turkey. Not bad for a nation living principally on bread, rice and bacon. In the country districts, though, food is still to be had - as well as for those who are able and willing to pay the price.

Wednesday. Spent the whole day at the office preparing reports for Brussels and taking care of local affairs. In the evening Mr. C., Mr. J. and Eckstein and I passed an hour at De Geynst's. Returned to the office afterwards and wrote till 1 a.m.

Thursday. Took the morning train to Brussels. On leaving Tournai we pass by the 500 Russians who are working at different points along the railroad. Mr. Kellogg was at Brussels, having come in place of Mr. Hoover, who is about to leave for America. He brings news of new and satisfactory understanding between the Belgian govt., the English govt. and the C.R.B. - C.N.

After the afternoon meeting, Brown and I went to Mlle. Piret's for tea and there met the four nieces. Had supper with Jackson in the evening.

Friday, Jan. 12 Spent the morning at Brussels. Took a long walk and visited the Cinquenaire Museum, which contains a very fine collection of antiquities. The mummies 3,000 years old make one think how short life is after all, and that all our troubles, no matter how serious they seem to us now, will be swallowed up and pass into insignificance with the years to come.

Visited the "Oeuvre de la Dentelle" which keeps a large number of Belgian women employed on lace which is exported to England and America. Wonderful pieces of all kinds, mounting even to 4,000 francs the piece, have been made for royalty of all Europe here. I selected a modest priced and appropriate centre-cloth eventually destined as a gift to mother.

Returned to Tournai by the afternoon train and spent the remainder of the day at the office.

Saturday. Rose late. At the office all day. In the evening we had supper at Mre. Lambert's and played "Friscon" afterwards. Snowed quietly during most of the day.

Sunday, Jan. 14th Woke up to find several inches of snow on the ground. At 11 o'clock Mr. C. Mr. J. and I started out for Popuelles. Made the trip part way by the little steam tram which chugs along 8 mi. an hour and the rest on foot. Mr. & Mrs. Defontaine met us and we had a fine dinner at their farm. Our luxurious spread reminded me of the days at Shonkwilers! The farmers in Belgium are those who have felt the war the least. They enjoy meat, milk and butter and have all the products of their soil - the surplus is sold at big profit. Price of land is doubled. Those who raised tobacco during the past year made enough money from one crop to completely pay for the land on which it was cultivated.

On the way home from Popuelles we stopped in to wait for the

/tram

tram at an éstaminet (café). Mr. C. and I fell to talking of American customs and traditions. During half an hour the whole room filled with simple country peasants, their wives and children - listened with admiring eyes to the "stranger" from the other side of the world. Mr. C. & Mr. J. told me about it afterwards.

Monday. Mr. Wilmart, Lt. Willis and I went to Mons in the machine for the C.P. meeting. Met Cade at Ath and took him on with us. After the meeting a farewell luncheon was given for Cade.

Returned to Tournai in the afternoon. Lt. Willis had quite a grouch following the incident of the chauffeur at Valenciennes last week and the latest note of the Allies stating their terms of peace.

Tuesday. - Spent the day on various matters at the office. Went to De Geynst's for the evening. Where the two little boys, Guy and Pierre, had a small box wrapped up in tissue paper. Inside was a wallet accompanied by a card "to our dear friend who, to the peril of his life, has saved our beloved Gyp" - written out in good English.

Wednesday. Jan. 17th Mr. Wilmart and I took the 6 a.m. train for Mons via Ath. The cannonading was very loud at Ath from the direction of Douai.

Took up the functions as head provincial delegate at Mons this morning. Presided at the monthly meeting of the 40 provincial inspectors. Had dinner at Hueptgen's and went afterwards to the Dock office. Mr. Von Mohl, the foreman in charge, told us of the events during the early days of the C.R.B. - of Murdock, his remarkable household, and lavish generosity and of the vigorous regime of Robinson Smith, with his curious system of yellow cards.

I am to live at Mr. Masson's. Had supper there this evening and am very comfortably settled.

Thursday. Made the weekly trip to Brussels. On the go steadily all day.

Friday. Took the early morning train to Mons. Took part in the meeting of the Provincial Committee. Busy at the office all afternoon, and took the evening train to Tournai. Dropped in at Mr. Castaigne's at 8.30. and found a gentleman there who spoke English and had been in Denver several years ago.

Went over affairs at the Tournai office, and rolled in early.

Saturday. The busy day at Tournai. Took part in meetings of the C.R. and of the Regional inspectors.

We spent the evening at De Geynst's.

Sunday. Jan. 18th. Rose late and spent a part of the morning

/at the office

Had dinner at Vaulx at the home of the burgomaster, Mr. Thorne, with Mr. Janson, Mr. C., Mr. Carbonelle, Mr. & Mrs. Wibaut and a Polish Count. The chief subject of conversation everywhere is the ravitaillement - soap, condensed milk, peas, beans, and salted herrings - even in the salons of highest society. All of the women in all classes are interested in and serve daily at children's charity works etc.

We returned home on foot along the canal, and after supper went to De Ceynst's to spend the evening.

Monday. Rolled out early and took the 3.30 a.m. train from Tournai to Mons. Spent a very busy at the office. Eckstein came down from Brussels to talk over the work of the Tournai office which he is to take now. We had dinner at Masson's. Eck. left for Tournai on the evening train and I rolled in early after supper.

Tuesday. In the new Mons étape region we are no longer allowed to use our C.R.B. machine without being in the company of a German officer. As Willis is still at Tournai we therefore have to make our trips on vicinal and by foot. Mr. Midol, the chief provincial inspector, and I started out at 8 a.m. Visited several communes inspecting the C.R.B. stores, the book-keeping and general system of each local committee. We also exhorted the chiefs of police in each of the communes to co-operate with us in stopping the traffic in C.R.B. foodstuffs. Every person who receives the American imports is to have only his fixed ration of food and can not under any conditions sell this. As the open market price of these foodstuffs is sometimes 4 or 5 times that of the C.R.B. there is often a great temptation for the poor to dispose of their ration.

Mr. Midol and I had dinner at Mr. Legrand's, a very hospitable family at St. Ghislain.

We returned to Mons late in the afternoon. Worked at the office until 7, and then went to supper at Hueppens with Don G.

Wednesday. Busy at the office all morning. Willis came to Mons in the machine in the afternoon. Don and I returned to Tournai with him. The weather was bitter cold. On reaching Tournai the three of us went to Mt. St. Aubert and had coffee in Madame Pottiau's kitchen. The mountain, covered with snow, was a beautiful sight.

Spent the afternoon at Tournai talking over different matters with Mr. Wilmart. After supper, Gregory, Eck and I went to the M.P. show with the De Ceynst's and Mme. Lambert.

Thursday. Left Tournai for Brussels on the 6 a.m. train. On the go all day at Brussels with meetings and different affairs to straighten out. Mr. Kellogg who is here for a few days from London had considerable interesting news. The C.R.B. after having maintained for several months a very low price on Belgian bread (2/3 the present price at New York) is

now \$6,000,000 in debt. Mr. Hoover has just left for N.Y. to arrange affairs.

The most important question of the moment is the freezing of the canals. Water transport is now stopped, and all C.R.B. goods must be brought in by rail. Spent a quiet evening at the house. Mr. Wilson's address to the Senate, published today, regarding the choice of a permanent peace basis is very good and well received here.

Friday. Up at 6 a.m. to take the early train for Mons. Took part in the meeting of the Provincial Committee. In the afternoon talked over matters with Carstairs the delegate for Mariemont-Charleroi. Willis and I had a little tiff over a letter addressed to another officer on the milk question.

Had supper in the evening at Huggens.

Saturday. Left for Brussels on the morning train. At the C.R.B. office all afternoon. Spent a quiet evening at the house.

Sunday. Jan. 28th. Rose early, spent the morning at Brussels, visiting the Palace of Justice and the Art Museum. The Palace of Justice, three years ago the scene of bustle and activity is now comparatively quiet. The greater part is occupied by German troops who are established in permanent living quarters.

Late in the morning I went to the site of the English Presbyterian Church, hoping to hear a good sermon. It was deserted and gave entirely the impression of "closed till the end of the war".

After lunch I left for Malines in the afternoon. It is an ancient town of 60,000 inhabitants, showing considerable evidence of bombardment. Nearly all inhabitants went to England. The beautiful cathedral lost most of its windows in the events of 1914 and is now being reconstructed. The old section of the town - the Fedoinage - is filled with low white houses of a very picturesque effect.

Returning to Brussels in the evening I spent the night at the Palace Hotel.

Monday. Took the early train to Tournai to get latest situation on the shipping which is held up everywhere by the prolonged freeze. Returned to Mons in the afternoon. Had supper at Masson's and spent the evening afterwards at Marcou's, relatives of Mr. Castaigne. Made a great hit with the 12 months old baby, who crowed and held out his hands, and reminded me of Teddy as I left him.

Tuesday. Having a special permit to leave the étaps in the machine. Don and I started out in the morning to make a tour of the mills and warehouses in the Charleroi region. Visited La Louviere, Hayettes, big bread-baking establishment), Mariemont, Charleroi. Reached the latter place at 1.30. and nearly famished. After satisfying our hunger we visited

Mr. Pasquin

Mr. Rasquin and later the burgomaster, Mr. Devreux, who brought out an old bottle of fine Bourgogne. Fortunate for me to have had Robinson Smith as predecessor in the Hainaut and at the same time Temperance Champion - he has broken the ice everywhere.

Continuing our trip we visited the model C.R.B. store at Thuin, and reached Mons about 6 o'clock. Had supper and spent the evening at Huepgens.

Wednesday. The Mons C.R.B. machine now reposes at Casteau a little hamlet just outside of the Mons étape. Don and I took the 9 o'clock train to Casteau. The plain near the village was covered with German troops going through different manoeuvres. The young recruits are obliged to rest, stomach flat, on the bitter cold snow sometimes for an hour. They hold the firing position and must crawl gradually towards the enemy's trenches. This drilling is done chiefly to harden the men.

The air is filled at the present time with the mystery of coming events. A terrible offensive is expected on the West Front - but we do not know which side is to commence it. The vicinity of Mons, all the small villages are filled with drilling troops. The larger number of the soldiers here at the present time come directly from the Roumanian front. The war has settled down to a dull daily grind. Although regiments are marching to and fro to the tune of the life, the sound of the music itself is depressing:

Leaving Casteau at 10 o'clock Gregory and I made the round of Soignes, Ath and Peruwelz. Got action going on the trans-shipment by rail of a boat frozen on the ice at Ath. At Peruwelz, Mr. Eugene's received us very warmly and took us in for lunch. He threatens to give his resignation if the C.H. persists in the reduced rice ration of 1/2 lb. per month.

Returning to Mons I worked at the office till 7. Had supper at Masson's, and afterwards went to see Lt. Willis who is installed in new headquarters at Mons.

Thursday. Gregory and I went to Brussels via Casteau. Weather continues bitter cold, hovering between 0 and 10°. Attended the meeting of the Comité National in the morning. At the afternoon meeting of the C.R.B. the question of the newly declared German blockade was taken up. The German government, however, has given the Commission a special assurance for the protection of all our transatlantic boats, and we hope that the ravitaillement will continue as regularly as usual.

All transports by canal are now entirely stopped, and because of the shortage of rolling stock the food situation is serious. Of wheat 200 cars are being shipped daily from Rotterdam with other foodstuffs in proportion.

Had supper in the evening with Jansen at Gregory's. Don G. thinks

/the English

the English anti-ravitaillement party may break off our work at any time, but I reasoned it out otherwise and offered 10 to 1 that the C.R.B. would continue until the end of the war.

Friday. Gregory and I returned to Mons via Casteau in the machine and vicinal, transporting 500 pairs of rubber soles and heels cut out of old C.R.B. tires and to be given free to the poor. Took part in the meeting of the C.P. explaining at the same time the shipping situation. All the Hainaut boats caught in the ice in the Flanders are to be turned over to the Ghent C.P. - and we will receive all shipments by rail from Rotterdam and Brussels.

Had a busy afternoon at the office. Left at the last minute to take the evening train for Tournai, but reached the station just in time to see the red tail-light disappearing in the distance. Came back for supper at the Esperance with the intention of taking the 7 o'clock train to Brussels. The train was very late. While waiting at the station a Red Cross train bound for Germany rolled into the station. During its stop porters ran along from car to car handing up through the windows bowls of steaming soup. To add a little cheer to the occasion I distributed half a dozen boxes of cigarettes to the returning wounded.

Reached Brussels at 11 o'clock and went to the Palace Hotel for the night.

Saturday. Feb. 3 Rose early to take the 6.22 train for Tournai. The train was announced 170 minutes late; then 275; then 385; then 480 minutes. Finally she rolled in from Berlin 8 hours late.

Reached Tournai at 5 p.m., and found Mr. Castaigne in bed with the grippe. Spent a time at the office talking over matters with Mr. Wilmart until 7 p.m. After supper with Mr. Janson we went to see De Geynsts. Returned and read at the office until 10 o'clock.

Sunday. Mr. Wilmart and I started on foot for Perennes at 10 o'clock. It is at this point that the Mons canal branches off from the River. We have several C.R.B. wheat boats caught fast in the ice of the canal. A strip of ice a mile long and 20 feet wide is being cut to permit the boats to get free and return to the River, whence they will be brought back to Tournai. The ice is nearly a foot thick; 60 men are engaged in the work.

Although the weather was very cold our round trip of 14 miles warmed us up considerably before reaching home. Mr. W. and I talked over certain plans for after the war, as to possibilities of his being able to enter into a work more in line with his capability.

I had been invited for 1 o'clock lunch at De Geynst's but reached there at 2. Found a warm welcome, however, and put away a hearty meal after the morning's walk. In the afternoon we took a stroll with Mrs. Lambert and Mr. Janson. Passed by the large flooded ponds along the edge of the town where there were a great many skaters. The German soldiers are

/especially

especially good on the ice.

Mr. Castaigne is still in bed but hopes to get up tomorrow.

After supper I spent the evening at the office until 11 p.m. finishing up different instructions on shipping, milling etc.

Monday. Rose early to take the 4 a.m. train to Mons. On arriving I went to my room at Masson's and slept until 8 o'clock. Busy at the office all morning. Our wheat trains are now beginning to arrive.

On returning to the office this afternoon I was surprised to hear the astonishing news that the U.S. had recalled our American Ambassador from Berlin. The situation appears to be very critical but Gregory and I agreed to stay on the job until further orders. Our great fear is that the first consequence of the break will be the discontinuance of the Belgian Ravitaillement. Lt. Willis returned from Brussels late in the afternoon with more reassuring news that it was felt the Commission could continue to work under a special arrangement.

Don G. and I had dinner in the evening at Masson's. We talked of the various possibilities of the war.

I wondered tonight what the folks at home in their uncertainty would be thinking. For our part we feel entirely safe and unworried about our position. I am afraid, however, that we will all be in Holland looking for a job at this time next week.

Tuesday. Spent the early part of the morning straightening out the Tournai - La Louviere wheat situation with Lt. Willis' aid over the telephone.

Our office building is to be taken over for a Red Cross Hospital the middle of next week and we have been asked to find new quarters. Mr. Midol, Mr. Masson and I visited the School of Mines together this morning, to examine the possibility of using this building.

At 10 o'clock Mr. Midol, Lt. Willis and I started out for a day's inspection tour with the machine. We visited several towns and came to Chimay in time for lunch. Here we had some wild boar, an excellent meat. Though this is the second day of broken diplomatic relations, Lt. Willis discussed the general situation "pro and con" - chiefly "pro" - in a friendly way.

The country in the Chimay region is heavily covered with snow. The weather was bitter cold but being well-bundled we got comfortably through our round of 150 km.

Reached Mons at 6 o'clock. I had supper with Hueyprens and we talked over the present situation until 11 o'clock. Reached the final conclusion that in spite of the enormous losses of both sides during the

war, each nation is going to withdraw with certain advantages in the way of improvement for national and individual character.

Returned home and wrote until 1 a.m.

Wednesday. Feb. 7th Worked at the office all morning. Lieut. Willis and I left for Feruwelz in the machine at 12, and there I had lunch with Mr. Baugines. Mr. B. was very much upset over the present international situation, and was relieved to hear that the ravitaillement system would probably continue.

Reached Tournai at 2 o'clock. Mr. Castaigne is now well but can not leave the house. Spent the aft. at office. After supper De Geynst dropped in for the evening and we had a round of bridge.

Packed my trunk afterwards so as to have everything in Brussels in case of a hasty departure.

Thursday. Left Tournai for Brussels on the 6 a.m. train. "Denny" our faithful office boy, arrived in the nick of time with my trunk. Mr. Baugines, Blanmailland and Deenenpart were on the train. At Brussels Mr. Baugines met me at the C.R.B. office and we went to the meeting of the Comité National. It was quite a memorable occasion, the air being tense over the international situation. This together with the freezing of all the canals places us in a very critical position. The President, Mr. Franqui, however, assured us that the C.R.B. and C.N. were working shoulder to shoulder to pull through the present crisis, - and that in spite of the gloom the organization had already passed through many dark periods. I invited Mr. Baugines to lunch at the C.R.B., and he sent us a very fine bouquet of flowers in appreciation to the Americans, to grace the table.

In the afternoon the Hainaut C.P. had its reunion in the C.R.B. offices. Mr. Pasquin of Charleroi replies to Blanmailland's finely balanced plan for "bran" distribution. Busy the rest of the afternoon at the office.

Ordered a pair of tan shoes today at 60f. This at current prices is a bargain.

In the evening Gregory and I went to Mr. Francois for supper. The auto was run into by a street car on the way. Little damage done, but Julian and the motorman had a terrible argument in ear-splitting Flemish. Passed a very pleasant and interesting evening at Francois'. They have an attractive little girl who reminded me of Ann.

Friday. Feb. 9th Harry Dunn and I took the 8 o'clock from Brussels for Mons. Temperature 10 above zero, and the train was unheated. Coal is one of the rarest articles on the market at the present time, and

is used very economically. At Brussels coal is \$20 to \$30 a ton owing to the stopping of all canal service and the requisition of all railway equipment for military and ravitaillement purposes.

The exorbitant price of coal and the long cold spell are working untold suffering throughout the country. The Comité of Secours which formerly gave 200 lbs. of coal per home and per month has had to abandon its charity on account of the scarcity of the combustible.

The daily mortality at Brussels is doubled due to effects of the exposure to which the poor are subject. To economize coal, schools have been temporarily closed throughout the country. Then stocks are requisitioned and distributed to the poor. Big warming halls are being established everywhere, and in some places hot soup is served free in these buildings.

Harry D. spent the morning looking about town while I worked at the office. We had dinner at Masson's.

Took a trip to the Dock Office in the afternoon and I explained some of our arrangements and systems to Dunn. We went to Huepgen's for supper and spent the evening there. They are a most delightful family. Madame and her daughter rarely leave the house and lead a most quiet life except for the brusque invasions of the American delegates. Mr. Huepgen is very fatherly, methodical, reasoning, and always wanting to help.

Saturday, Feb. 10th Left for Brussels in the machine with Lieut. Willis at 7.30. Weather very cold. Spent the morning at the Brussels office. The American legation at Brussels was closed yesterday by request of the German authorities. The minister, Brand Whitlock, will continue to remain in Belgium as a private citizen.

The situation of the C.R.B. is becoming increasingly critical. No food boats have arrived at Rotterdam within the last two weeks on account of the blocus. The Belgian canals still remain frozen. The occupying authorities wish to restrict the powers of the Commission, to withdraw all the delegates from the provinces and leave only a central committee of five at Brussels.

Did several errands during the afternoon. Had supper at the Taverne Royale and afterwards went to see the Moliere players, an excellent company. Spent the night at the Brussels house.

Sunday. Took the early train to Tournai. A husky General who mounted in the same compartment placed his suit case in the rack on top of my brand new hat, it being rather dark at the time. He then proceeded to hermetically seal the compartment by closing all means of ventilation. In half an hour I was obliged to leave the Turkish bath and move into the neighbouring compartment.

At Tournai I found Mr. C. O. and recovered from his illness.

We went to the photographers and had several snaps taken arm in arm.

In the afternoon Mr. Tonnelier, accompanied by a violin and violoncello gave a very fine concert of Russian music for a small group of friends at Mr. Castaigne's.

Had dinner in the evening with Mr. J., Mr. C. and the De Geynst's at Mme. Lambert's. They are a very jovial crowd and we pass many pleasant evenings together.

Today's papers announce the departure of two American steamers from N.Y. to Bordeaux - as a test of the fact whether neutral steamers not carrying contrebant may run the blocus. Their fate is awaited with interest.

Monday, Feb. 12th Took the early morning train from Tournai back to Mons. Busy at the office all day. Had lunch at Mr. Masson's, and Don came in for supper in the evening.

Tuesday. Day of our weekly inspection tour through the provinces. - We - Mr. Midol, Gregory and I - visited the regions of Soignies and Ath today. In the morning we passed by Mainwault, where a German zeppelin fell some months ago. We were given a piece of aluminium and some bronze wire which were left from the wreck.

At Flobecq Mr. & Mrs. Jouret welcomed us very warmly and invited us to dinner. Mr. Jouret is the borgomaster and also the president of the Secours Committee.

Flobecq is one of the most prosperous regions of Belgium, having gained a fortune from its tobacco and farm products since the beginning of the war.

In the afternoon we continued our trip by way of Lahamaide and Lessines. The latter, a village of 12,000, has had 1300 workmen deported. At Lessines we saw a group of 400 Russian prisoners trudging along in wooden shoes and still wearing their original uniforms. Among them was one individual of pronounced Japanese features, probably a Korean.

Had supper with Gregory at Heuppen's. Don was almost all in with the grippe.

Wednesday, Feb. 13th Spent the morning at the office. Went to Peruwelz at noon where I had lunch with Mr. Baugines. Afterwards the two of us went by machine to Pommeroul where five C.R.B. barges are blocked in the ice. Arrangements were made to unload 2 wheat boats each of 300 tons. Mr. B. requisitions all the farmer's teams in the vicinity to do the hauling.

Continued on to Brussels where I arrived just in time for supper

/at the

house with half a dozen of the other men.

Great excitement reigned at Brussels. In answer to certain demands and restrictions placed on the Commission by the German authorities, the Brussels office received a telegram from London ordering the Commission to leave the country within 48 hours.

Inasmuch as the authorities showed a very reasonable attitude and agreed to continue all the privileges granted to the Commission, Mr. Gregory has countermanded the order from London, and we are to stay.

Thursday. Went to the meeting of the C.N. in the morning. That of the C.R.B. in the afternoon was especially interesting, and Mr. Gregory was given a warm ovation for his good work in helping us here. C.R.B. members have their pictures taken on the roof before the meeting.

Had supper and spent the evening at Mr. Francois.

Friday - Gregory, down with the grippe, was obliged to remain in Brussels. The morning train to Mons pulled in late but I reached the meeting of the Provincial Committee in time to reassure them on the situation at Brussels.

Had lunch with Mr. Masson. Spent the afternoon at the office. In the evening I went to Huepgen's for supper, and we discussed the course of events.

Saturday. - Lieut. Willis and I left for Tournai in the machine at 8 o'clock. Weather is improving now; the canals are thawing and we expect to have boat service re-established in a short time.

The communal burgomasters at the bi-weekly meeting were reassured to see and hear that the Commission had not left Belgium, as was announced in all the Holland and German newspapers, following Mr. Hoover's order of last Wednesday.

Presided at the meeting of the Controllers in the afternoon. We now 6 instead of 4 at Tournai and the discussion is 50% more lively.

In the evening I invited the De Ceynst's and Mrs. Lambert to Mr. Castaigne's for a supper of oysters, - stewed and fried. It was the first time they had ever tasted cooked oysters - the Belgian custom always being to eat them on the shell - but they found the innovation very good. We passed an interesting evening, and I took Mrs. Lambert home "sous les plis du drapeau américain" after the official hour of 9 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 18. Took the 4 a.m. train back to Mons, Lieut. Willis having ret'd. in the machine the night before. Slept two hours more at Masson's and got up in time to meet Williams who came down from Brussels on the morning train. We had dinner together at Huepgen's. In the

afternoon

afternoon we dropped in on Masson's and on Willis. Lt. Willis, who had just given me the order that all delegates whether in the provinces or at Brussels could not move from their posts, was a little upset over Wms.' arrival from Brussels. The Vernutlungstelle at Brussels on being informed, phoned orders to Mons to detain Williams. He had already returned on the evening train, however, - after saying good-bye to all his friends at Mons. Wm. leaves for America this week.

Saturday, March 3rd. The last two weeks have been so filled with events and so completely occupied that I have not had the time to put down my daily observations.

The international situation remains unchanged. The two American boats which were to have served as test for the blocus reached Bordeaux safely.

In the meantime there is a general retreat taking place along the front which is being attacked by the English in the neighbourhood of the Somme. Germany attributes this to a strategic move on their part which will render valueless the careful preparations of a great English offensive. The English are now obliged to establish new lines, and the delay occasioned by this will defer a new offensive for several months.

There is great activity of troops all along the region behind the front. Troops and artillery are continually on the move in the vicinities of Mons and Tournai. At Mons for each departure of troops to the front, the German band goes to the station and solemnly plays as the train pulls out. With the new "sea blockade" by which Germany is confident of forcing England to terms, the German troops have greater hope. Those who are now leaving daily for the front are confident of reaching Paris.

The latest news in connection with the Somme retreat is that St. Quentin, a town of 40,000 is evacuated by the population and is being very strongly fortified. The material evidence which we have of the bitter fighting along this front is the rapid filling of the Mons hospitals. Among the wounded are German, French, English, Moroccans, and even Serbs.

Nearly every day a solid "Red Cross" train of 15 to 20 cars rolls into the station and the men are transferred from the station to the hospitals in motor ambulances.

Because of uncertain conditions the C.R.E. men of northern France have remained at Brussels during the past month without going back to their posts. Being in the Belgian *étape* Lieut. Willis gave me orders last week not to leave the province but this rule was changed in time to permit us to go to Brussels for the Thursday meeting. The prospect of a peaceful arrangement of the present broken diplomatic relations seems further away every day. In spite of this, however, our motto is to work on from day to day, counting with certitude on at least the future continuance of the ravitaillement. I still keep on good terms with Willis and we discuss the

/situation

situation in a friendly way every day.

Last Sunday I spent the week-end at Bunge's country place, at Antwerp. Several other of the C.R.B. men were there and we had a restful day, taking two long walks one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. We visited Mr. Bunge's famous stable of 142 cows which furnishes 2,000 quarts of milk daily for the children of Antwerp. Although the whole estate is a model for order and beauty of arrangement, one of the interesting customs that struck me particularly was the manner in which the horse stables are kept. Every stall was decorated with thatched straw held in place by interwoven red white and blue ribbons. In front of the stalls and through the carriage rooms the most elaborate designs were carried out in multi-coloured sands on the floor - which had to be renewed every two or three days. Mr. Bunge, who is the element of simplicity, leads one might say a nearly ideal life. He is surrounded by his mother, children, grandchildren and other relatives - never a Sunday passes at his home when there are not at least 20 around his dinner table.

Sunday night I went from Antwerp, arriving in Tournai Monday morning. Spent the usual busy day there and returned to Mons Tuesday a.m.

Tuesday afternoon I made a visit to Quaregnon a coal-mining village near Mons to examine conditions in the miners' homes. Since the blockade of Feb. 1st no more wheat boats are arriving and we have been obliged to greatly reduce the bread ration. The consequent suffering has produced a number of demonstrations in the Borinage (coal-mining) district this past week.

A visit to several homes at Quaregnon revealed the lamentable existing conditions. The poor people on account of the scarcity of native food stuffs must depend entirely on their C.R.B. ration. Mothers and children have to sacrifice their bread daily to give the father strength enough to descend in the mine. The results of my visit to three houses picked out at random I set down in a report to our Director, Mr. Gregory.

The Belgians who were deported in Germany last Fall and who refused to work even in the face of starvation are now returning in great numbers - Charleroi and Soignes. They are the object of a special system of generous feeding at the present time to rebuild their health.

Last Thursday morning a train of 1,000 Roumanian prisoners - the first I have seen - stopped at the Mons station. While waiting for the Brussels train I had an opportunity to see them descend from the freight cars in which they were being transported and fetch their morning soup. They were in a sorry state, a sight never to be forgotten.

Time is flying these days as I have never known it to do before. The work keeps me steadily on the go - some weeks I scarcely take two meals in the same place. Last Tuesday night at Huppger's in the way of a novelty, I rolled up my sleeves, went into the kitchen and prepared the

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first fried oysters they had ever tasted. We find ourselves here encircled by a marvellous group of friends - the foremost statesmen and business-men of the country. After fulfilling our day's work nothing is more pleasant and inspiring than the interesting evenings which we pass in their house.

Sunday. March 4th. Went to Tournai in the machine with Lieut. Willis against a bitter cutting wind all the way. En route we stopped off a few minutes to visit the beautiful grounds and chateau of the Prince de Ligne.

Found Mr. Castaigne and Mr. Wilmart at work, on reaching Tournai. I spent the morning with Wilmart and after our work was cleaned up we speculated some on the future.

Mr. C. and I took lunch at De Geynst's. I returned afterwards to the office - and worked and read there most of the afternoon. In the evening we had our weekly "soirée" - Mme. Lambert, the De Geynst's and Mr. C. In escorting Mme. Lambert home at 10 o'clock, an hour after the military retiring hour, we were held up twice. My American and military passports no longer carry their former weight, but Mme. Lambert's knowledge of German smoothed out the situation both times - first for an officer, second for a night sentinel.

The two important events which have taken place within the last few days and which indicate the increasing seriousness of the situation are the closing of all schools and the shutting down of all factories employing more than twelve men. Only the mills and factories under C.R.B. employ, the coal mines and those establishments which have special permission from the German authorities may continue. This measure which throws thousands out of work is taken to limit the consumption of coal and iron, to cut down the transports which the R.R. already overcharged are obliged to carry, and to centralize all existing industry toward the service of the occupying authorities.

The closing of the schools was done for two reasons, first, to place Belgium on the same base as Germany where the schools have been closed since the first of the year; second to permit the distribution of the large coal stocks on hand in the schools among the poorer population of the towns. Coal at Brussels and other similarly located points is at \$25. to \$30. the ton, and this step permits the poor to have free coal at a time when it is badly needed. In many places the empty schools will be transformed into barracks, hospitals, or quarters for French refugees.

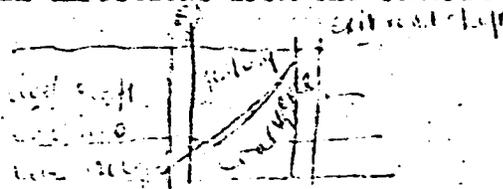
Monday. Came back to Mons. early with Lieut. Willis in the machine. After straightening out correspondence, etc. at the office Gregory and I started out for Flenu. Here we were met by good-natured Mr. Cravez, the "coal-king" of the Borinage. He turned us over to his chief engineer and we started out to visit "Shaft 12". Before descending in the coal

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mine we were obliged to completely change our clothes - putting on miner's uniform, shoes, and leather helmet.

At the top of the shaft we were each provided with a miner's lamp. The descent was made in an elevator where the three of us were barely able to find cramping room. During the downward voyage I could not help thinking how disappointing it would be to have the cable break and let the cage fall 2,500 ft. in a country like Belgium where one might meet a more romantic end in the way of crossing the path of an "obus" or an aeroplane bomb.

We disembarked at the 800 ft. level. The mine at this depth is comfortably warm and as one descends further it becomes even unbearably warm. The general mine construction consists in erecting horizontal galleries branching out in several directions from the central shaft at each level.



The coal is found in veins from 2 to 3 ft. thick which run generally in a slanting direction.

We descended one of these veins 2 1/2 feet high and slanting at an angle of 45° for a distance of 300 ft. On reaching the foot of the incline I felt to see if the seat of my trousers was still there. All along the line we passed by grimy-faced miners working away on their backs and picking the coal. When they heard we were Americans the universal cry was "Bread! More Bread! When is the ration to be increased?" "As soon as the C.R.B. boats can get by the combined English and German blockades and unload their precious wheat cargoes" was the only answer we could give. The miners are in a really pitiable condition - many of them unable to live on their ordinary ration descend the mine daily with their dinner pails filled with "choux-navets" (cattle-beets, which were never known for human consumption before this winter). The daily bread ration for these men is 1 1/2 oz. which quantity they eat easily in a single meal. Flour fraudulently sold by the farmers (in addition to that sold by the C.R.B. at 4 p the pound) is offered to the miners at 35 and 40 p the pound. A miner thus spends often a day's wages to have 2 pounds of flour.

The washing and separation of the coal into different sizes is a very interesting process. The labour is done chiefly by women. At the termination of our trip we were all so blackened that one did not recognize the other. After a good shower bath, however, we were restored to partial respectability. In all the modern mines the workers take their shower at the close of each day's work.

As a souvenir of the visit Mr. Gravez gave me a miniature miner's

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lamp. Afterwards he invited Gregory the engineer and I for lunch at Ray's. Spent the balance of the afternoon at the office.

In the evening Don and I went out to Mr. de Munck's country home for supper. The auto service - in which we were so handicapped during the early days of the Mons étaps - is now working fine.

Lt. Willis, his secretary, and his ordonnance are now regularly at our disposition for any trips which need be made in auto. In fact a soldier in the front seat by the chauffeur adds a certain "class", which the machine did not have when we were allowed to go about unsurveyed. Lt. Willis' two aides are very good-natured and obliging - "Friday" always wears a smile from ear to ear and enjoys automobile riding immensely.

Tuesday. March 6th. Left Mons at 8.30 with Gregory, Mr. Midol and our orderly. We stopped off a minute at the Hennuyer Mill to ask about the special flour coming from Germany for our French refugees. Mr. Hennuyer told us that a series of the "L2s", each hauled by six big auto tractors passed through Boussu and St. Ghislain yesterday. The "Big Bertha's" (so nicknamed after Mme. Krupp) were described by the population as being big enough to permit "a man and a half" to enter their 16 inch barrel.

Continuing our trip we arrived at Soignies, one of our seven regional centres, and emphasized to the Committee their the importance of installing the "Soupe Populaire" in all the villages. Further on, at Ath, we took part in the opening of their new "Soups" - and partook each with relish a bowl of excellent "potage".

Mr. Baugines gave us a warm welcome at Peruwelz, and served us among other things at lunch his American specialty - hot apple sauce. He told us of an interesting incident which had taken place at Peruwelz that morning - 350 mutinous German soldiers were marched through town to the station to be sent into the interior of Germany.

On our return in the afternoon we preached "Soupe Populaire" in several towns. One village of 500 inhabitants, Neutrages, which we passed is to have 2,500 French refugees next week. For this purpose the large schools and convents in the locality have been emptied of their original occupants and will be placed at the disposal of the refugees.

Gregory and I reached Mons unfortunately too late for a concert to which Mr. Masson had invited us. Lt. Willis who donned civilian clothes for the occasion and whom we did not recognize at first outside of his customary uniform - in switching Belgian and German time also arrived an hour too late for the concert. Don and I had supper with Masson's and spent the evening there.

Wednesday. Mar. 7th. Spent the morning at the office. After an early lunch at Ray's with Mr. Midol the two of us, accompanied by Lt. Willis,

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