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PRISONERS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE.

FIRST INTERIM REPORT.

WAR OFFICE PAPER No. 0103/9681.

[A 2103]

TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“To consider all applications for the Employment of Prisoners of War, and to decide whether they should be adopted.”

LIST OF MEMBERS:

Mr. JAMES F. HOPE, M.P., *Chairman.*

Sir HOWARD FRANK, *Vice-Chairman.*

Mr. S. MAGER, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. E. SEBAG MONTEFIORE, Home Office.

Lieut.-Colonel R. J. B. MAIR, War Office.

Sir H. E. MORGAN, K.B.E., Ministry of National Service.

Mr. T. M. TAYLOR, Ministry of Munitions.

Mr. G. D. ROSEWAY, *Secretary.*

Committee appointed, December, 1916

War Office Reg. Paper No. 0103/9681.

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0103/9681.

INTERIM REPORT.

PRISONERS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE.

1. This Committee was set up at the end of 1916, in succession to a former committee, established in September, 1916, which acted in an advisory capacity to the War Office. The earlier committee was formed originally with a view to the employment of prisoners of war upon the reclamation of land, but it also forwarded recommendations to the War Office regarding various other proposals for the employment of this labour.

It was afterwards decided, however, that the use of prisoner labour should be extended and made available for all suitable purposes of urgent national importance, and the present Committee was formed in December, 1916, with the following terms of reference:—

“To consider all applications for the employment of prisoners of war, and to decide whether they should be adopted.”

Representatives of the chief departments concerned in the employment of labour are included in the new committee, and representatives of the Home Office and War Office (Directorate of Prisoners of War) attend in an advisory capacity regarding technical and administrative details.

The Home Office and the Ministry of National Service were added to the lists of departments represented in January and October, 1917, respectively.

2. The Committee has held 48 meetings during the year 1917, and 5 meetings in 1918.

3. The Committee consider proposals for the employment of both combatant and interned civilian prisoners of war. The conditions of employment and the progress made in either direction are best dealt with separately.

(a.) *Combatant Prisoners of War*.—Certain deductions must be made from the grand total of prisoners in this country before the balance can be obtained to be regarded as available for the purposes of the committee. Officers are not allowed to work, and non-commissioned officers cannot be employed unless they volunteer (*see* Section (5)). The gangs of prisoners must not be mixed with civilian British, or civilian Alien labour, and must be separated from such labour as much as possible. No application must be put forward until the resources of the local labour exchange have been exhausted. The statement in Appendix A, attached to this report, gives details of the combatant prisoners of war in this country, from returns of the week ending 16th February, 1918. Appendix A (i) indicates the prisoners allotted but not yet employed.

(b.) *Interned Civilian Prisoners of War*.—These men cannot be compelled to work, and considerable difficulty has been experienced regarding their employment, especially in view of the recent note verbale of the German Government forbidding civilians to work outside their internment camps.

All questions relating to the employment of these men inside their camps and the release of individuals to approved work are still dealt with by the Home Office, but various suggestions have been put forward by the Committee for consideration for employment of these civilians on basket making, manufacture of artificial eyes and optical lenses, &c.

At the present time, 1,847 civilians are employed outside their parent camps.

4. Two difficulties have been found to interfere with the speedy employment of prisoners once they are allocated, viz., the provision of guards and accommodation.

The first difficulty has been in part overcome by restricting the size of the working camps, except those for agricultural purposes, to a minimum of 100 men, the number being increased wherever possible. After consultation with the military authorities concerned, and in view of the experience gained in the larger camps, the Committee have recommended to the War Office the abolition of guards for small parties of men employed in the neighbourhood of their working camps and returning to such camps at night. The suggested practice, which chiefly affects the small agricultural camps, has been approved and is now being carried out.

As regards accommodation, the Committee have found that some delay is almost unavoidable in this respect between the date of allocation and the date of actual commencement of work, owing to the difficulty in providing the material and labour needed for construction of the camps which have to be hatted, unless the men are only required in the summer months or available premises can be adapted. The Committee have represented to the authorities concerned the importance of providing accommodation for the prisoners directly they are allocated, in view of the resulting gain in work done, and considerable improvement has been effected, while an improved method of inspection and administration, recently suggested, should result in speedier employment.

5. Returns are furnished to the Committee at each meeting showing the total number of prisoners employed, the number allocated and awaiting employment (with any reasons for delays), and the number available for distribution. Applications for prisoners are then considered in view of the balance available and the relative importance of the work involved, special regard being given to those classes of work which have been given priority by decision of the War Cabinet. It has, however, been noted that although particular demands have often been represented as of peculiar urgency, no special steps have been correspondingly taken to secure rapidity of employment once the prisoners were allocated.

6. Owing to the delay which occurs in the provision of accommodation, arrangements have been made whereby prisoners may be employed temporarily in the vicinity of the parent camps upon approved work, chiefly of an agricultural character. This scheme has met with considerable success and has effectively bridged over the period of waiting for the completion of working camps. On 9th February, 1918, 2,876 men were so employed. At the suggestion of the Committee the War Office have issued instructions to the Camp Commandants regarding the voluntary employment of non-commissioned officers, but it has not been possible to make any great progress in this respect. On 9th February, 1918, 918 non-commissioned officers were employed.

7. Appendix B (i) attached to this report gives details of the present employment of the prisoners now working.

In addition, prisoners have been employed on various schemes now completed, details of which are given in Appendix B (ii).

8. The War Cabinet having decided that the allocation of prisoners of war should be transferred to the Ministry of National Service, the Committee ceased to function as a separate body from Friday, 8th February, 1918, and now acts as a sub-committee of the National Labour Priority Committee.

9. We desire to express our sincere appreciation of the great services of the representatives of the Home Office and War Office who have attended in an advisory capacity and on whom a mass of statistical work and many laborious enquiries are necessarily thrown. To the ability and assiduity of our Secretary, Mr. Roseway, our warm thanks are also due.

(Signed) JAMES F. HOPE, *Chairman.*

HOWARD FRANK, *Vice-Chairman.*

R. J. B. MAIR, *Lieut.-Colonel.*

S. MAGER.

E. SEBAG MONTEFIORE.

T. M. TAYLOR.

(Signed)

G. D. ROSEWAY, *Secretary.*

6. Owing to the delay which occurs in the provision of accommodation, arrangements have been made whereby prisoners may be employed temporarily in the vicinity of the parent camps upon approved work, chiefly of an agricultural character. This scheme has met with considerable success and has effectively bridged over the period of waiting for the completion of working camps. On 9th February, 1918, 2,876 men were so employed. At the suggestion of the Committee the War Office have issued instructions to the Camp Commandants regarding the voluntary employment of non-commissioned officers, but it has not been possible to make any great progress in this respect. On 9th February, 1918, 918 non-commissioned officers were employed.

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APPENDIX A.

DETAILS OF PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM RETURNS DATED WEEK
ENDING 9TH FEBRUARY, 1918.

Total number of prisoners of war in the United Kingdom (less officers, servants, sick in hospitals, &c.)	44,755	Employed permanently from parent camps—	
N.C.O.s. and unfits	9,825	Agriculture—	
Total in working camps... ..	23,749	Blandford	115
Allocated and waiting accommodation	6,168	Dorchester	42
Employed on camp duties in parent camps	1,006	Pattishall	30
		Stobs	50
			237
		Miscellaneous—	
		Dorchester	82
		Leigh	515
		Shrewsbury	150
			747
Employed in Royal Engineer Services from parent camps—		Special "Friendly" Camp at Feltham, employed on miscellaneous work, including agriculture, aerodromes, &c.	984
Blandford	141		
Brocton	500		
Catterick	500		
Dorchester	400		
Pattishall	12		
Stobs	92		
	1,645	Balance	529

APPENDIX A (ii.).

PRISONERS ALLOTTED, BUT NOT YET EMPLOYED.

MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS.				ADMIRALTY.			
Birmingham.—Sorting brass and other metals ...	150			Peterhead.—Seaplane Station	100		
Lincoln.—Brick making	75						
Frampton-on-Severn.—Manufacture of concrete slabs for Admiralty and Office of Works...	500						
Lancaster.—Road construction to National Steel Projectile Factory	30						
	755						
BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.				WAR OFFICE.			
Various camps—				Easton-on-the-Hill.—Royal Flying Corps Training			
Farming work (18)... ..	942			Depôt	400		
Ploughing	3,771			Orfordness.—Aerodrome work	200		
	4,713				600		
				Total	6,168		

APPENDIX B (1.)

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com-batants.	Civilians.
ADMIRALTY.			
Glendevon ...	Waterworks for Rosyth	187	...
Inverkeithing ...	Brick and tile making for the Admiralty.	53	...
Beachley... ..	Shipyards construction	1,998	...
	Total	2,238	...

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com-batants.	Civilians.
MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS.			
Burbage ...	Quarry, iron ore	209	...
Harperley ...	" ganister	230	...
Newlandside ...	" iron ore	565	...
Peakdale... ..	" "	200	...
Rowley	" "	111	...
Uppingham ...	" ironstone	170	...
Bowithwick ...	Wolfram ore quarry	120	...
	Carried forward ...	1,605	...

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com-batants.	Civilians.

Ministry of Munitions—continued.

	Brought forward ...	1,605	...
Port Talbot ...	Steel works extension...	516	...
Eastgate ...	Limestone quarry ...	310	...
Rowrah ...	" " ...	211	...
Stainton Siding...	" " ...	148	...
Corby ...	Ironstone quarry ...	...	133
Wakerley ...	Quarry, iron ore ...	199	...
Kinlochleven ...	Works for British Aluminium Corporation.	891	...
Raasay ...	Quarry, iron ore ...	287	...
Banbury ...	Railway to iron ore field.	249	...
Burton ...	Aerogun factory ...	500	...
Chelmsford ...	Hoffman & Co. (ball-bearings).	151	...
Oswestry ...	Quarry ...	50	...
Stainby ...	" ...	...	90
		5,117	223
	Total ...	5,340	

CONTROLLER OF TIMBER SUPPLIES.

Sproxton Moor ...	Timber felling ...	108	...
Kerry ...	" ...	130	...
Crickhowell ...	" ...	120	...
Hermitage ...	" ...	100	...
Lynford, West Tofts.	" ...	166	...
Panshanger ...	" ...	221*	...
Shere, Holmbury St. Mary.	" ...	141	...
Slindon ...	" ...	300	...
Southill ...	" ...	214	...
Woburn ...	" ...	144†	...
Beaulieu ...	" ...	218	...
Dawyck ...	" ...	90	...
Seaford ...	" ...	170	...
Warren Wood, Thetford.	" ...	204	...
Marshmoor Siding.	" ...	116	...
Hexhamshire, Slaley.	" ...	160	...
Langley Park ...	" ...	159	...
		2,781	...
	Agriculture ...	50	...
	Total ...	2,731	...

* 20 employed on agriculture.

† 30 employed on agriculture.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Crawford (Lanarkshire).	County Council Water Scheme.	220	...
Hairmyres ...	Excavation work for Tuberculosis Sanatorium.	170	...
	Total ...	390	...

ROAD BOARD.

Bilston ...	...	100	...
Port Clarence ...	Road Board. Excavation of slag.	230	...
Penmaenmaur ...	Quarrying for roads ...	123	...
	Total ...	453	...

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com-batants.	Civilians.

WAR OFFICE.

AVIATION.

Castle Bromwich	Aerodrome ...	105	...
Yatesbury ...	" ...	369*	...
Coal Aston ...	" ...	398	...
S. Carlton, Monk's Abbey.	" ...	220	...
Cove ...	" ...	280	...
Radford ...	" ...	...	479
Martlesham Heath.	" ...	172	...
Mill Hill ...	" ...	299	...
Dalmellington ...	" ...	395	...
Queensferry ...	Aircraft acceptance park.	...	235
Halton Park ...	Aerodrome ...	600	...
Northfield, Birmingham.	" ...	248	...
		3,086	714
		3,800	50
	Total ...	3,750	

* 50 employed on agriculture.

ROYAL ENGINEER WORKS.

Mill Down ...	Royal Engineers, Blandford.	199	...
Bulford ...	Royal Engineers, Southern Command.	...	170
Codford ...	" "	197	...
Fovant ...	" "	138	...
Larkhill ...	" "	1,248	...
Shirehampton, Perham Down.	" "	138	...
Sutton Veny ...	" "	...	131
Winchester ...	" "	...	411
Orfordness ...	Eastern Command	229	...
Sandhill Park ...	Southern Command	26	...
Chisleton ...	" "	183	...
		2,358	712
	Total ...	3,070	

MISCELLANEOUS.

Bramley Army Ordnance Department.	Erection of Army Ordnance Department Stores.	2,881	...
Newark House, Gloucester.	Work on oil drum sheds	95	...
Denby, Kilburn Hall.	Work under the Road Board for Messrs. Tarmac and Co.	60	...
	Total ...	3,036	...

FORAGE DEPÔTS.

Barry, Glamorganshire.	Forage ...	...	74
Boston Dock ...	" ...	...	136
	Total ...	...	210

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com- batants.	Civilians.
AGRICULTURE.			
Eardiston ...	Agriculture (work on land).	70	...
Knightwick (Martley) ...	" "	49	...
Peopleton ...	" "	80	...
Shelsley Walsh ...	" "	64	...
Wingland ...	Reclaiming land ...	251	...
Evesham ...	Market gardening ...	108	...
Craycombe House ...	" ...	100	...
Toddington ...	Fruit picking and orchard work.	74	...
Dunmow ...	Agriculture ...	105	...
Foxborrow ...	" ...	171	...
Hatfield ...	" ...	107	...
Hemel Hempstead.	" ...	65	...
Huntingdon ...	" ...	98	...
Kenninghall ...	Farm work ...	352	...
Kedlington ...	" ...	94	...
Lewes ...	Agriculture ...	206	...
Linton ...	" ...	102	...
Rochford ...	Farm work, wood cutting.	70	...
Rothwell ...	Agriculture ...	214	...
Ross-on-Wye ...	" ...	...	38
Burnham Norton, Norfolk.	Marsh drainage ...	75	...
Heacham (Snettisham).	" ...	74	...
Bungay, Shipmeadow.	Agriculture ...	102	...
South Ockenden, Essex.	" ...	211	...
Leasowe Castle, Cheshire.	Cleansing of River Birkett and mending sea wall. Breaking up and loading limestone and general work in quarries.	261	...
Carried forward ...		3,103	38

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com- batants.	Civilians.
Agriculture—continued.			
	Brought forward ...	3,103	38
Old Radnor ...	Agriculture ...	50	...
Stratford-on-Avon.	" ...	60	...
Leigh, Worcester-shire.	" ...	56	...
Chipping Ongar, Essex.	" ...	40	...
Meldreth, Cam- bridge.	" ...	45	...
Bygrave, near Baldock.	" ...	70	...
Woburn, Bedford- shire.	" ...	30	...
Yatesbury, Wilts	" ...	50	...
Woodham Fer- rers, Chelms- ford.	" ...	37	...
Panshanger ...	" ...	20	...
Mayland... ..	" ...	40	...
Halling	" ...	50	...
Halstead... ..	" ...	100	...
Great Hampton House.	" ...	100	...
Rochford, Wor- cestershire.	" ...	49	...
Storrington ...	" ...	100	...
Saffron Walden...	" ...	40	...
Shouldham ...	" ...	40	...
Southwick ...	Agriculture and Brigh- ton Gas Company.	126	...
Tutnall and Cobley.	Agriculture ...	35	...
		4,241	38
	Total	4,279	

APPENDIX B (ii.)

Construction of Army Ordnance Department stores at Altrincham ... 1,400
 Branch railway from main line to Royal Aircraft Factory, Farnborough ... 330

Aerodrome excavation work and construction in various parts of Great Britain ... 1,500
 Erection of storage huts at Port Richborough ... 1,500
 Reservoir at Beecraigs, water supply to Port Edgar 200