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124 East 28th Street,
New York, N. Y.,
June 16th, 1915.

Dear Mr. Rockefeller,

I appreciate deeply your gracious kindness in letting me have the privilege of calling upon you in the midst of such a busy day and on such short notice to lay before you the claims of the work among the prisoners of war as well as among the other soldiers which the Young Men's Christian Association have been permitted to inaugurate. In accordance with my promise I now put in writing the principal facts which I stated.

When I called upon you in your home shortly after my return from Europe in the month of December last I indicated that the International Committee desired to secure a fund of \$40,000 to help establish sample pieces of work among the soldiers of the different countries, especially in the training camps and hospitals. At that time, while we had the military prisons also in our thought we did not have permission to begin work in them. About February first, when the Foreign Department of the International Committee forwarded our annual appeal to your father for his co-operation, the work we had undertaken in the different countries, in the training camps and hospitals, had been so successful and the opportunities had so multiplied that we announced that we wished to secure a fund of \$100,000 instead of \$40,000. Even then, the remarkable opportunity in the military prisons had not come to us. Shortly after that, however, we sent to Germany one of our ablest representatives who had had successful experience in the Association work conducted during the Spanish War, and also in the different foreign lands, and sent to France and England as our representative one who guided the successful Association campaign in the Russo-Japanese War. We instructed these men to secure, if possible, from the different Governments permission to work among the military prisoners. President Wilson, the State Department and our American Ambassadors in London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Petrograd most heartily co-operated. As a result we first secured permission from the German Government to work in the more than 100 prison camps of Germany. These camps have on the average about 10,000 men and boys in each, or a total now of fully 1,000,000 Russian, British, French, Belgian and Canadian prisoners. After that we obtained similar permission from the British, French and Austro-Hungarian Governments. One of our representatives is now in Russia, and has been given permission to visit the military prisons in Siberia and we are expecting any day to hear that the Government will let us work among the large number of German prisoners in that country. Our plan is to erect in as many as possible of the prison camps Association buildings. These are as a rule 100 feet long, 30 feet to 40 feet wide, one story high, and having in them a large hall for lectures, meetings and entertainments and four or five smaller rooms for evening and day classes, as well as for library and committee purposes. We find in the light of experience that we can erect one of these modest buildings and furnish it and pay the expenses of ad-

ministration up to the middle of the autumn for \$2,000. Sometimes it has cost a little more and sometimes a little less. The other feature of the plan is to organize among the men in each camp an Association with from ten to twenty Committees and set this efficient nucleus to work among the rest of their 10,000 comrades. The success which has attended the working of this plan in different places has been such as to satisfy fully everyone who has examined it as to its most practical value and satisfactory results. Our Ambassador in Berlin who has studied at first hand the working of these Associations, and the use of these buildings, has written, expressing the earnest hope that we may do a similar work in as many as possible of the other military camps in Europe. See accompanying sheet.

There are now in the military prison camps of the countries on both sides of the struggle a little over 2,000,000 men. There they are, shut up until the end of the war. A careful study of the conditions has shown that they are in grave danger of physical, mental and moral deterioration unless something is done to occupy their minds, and so far as possible, their bodies. Our plan contemplates meeting this need in various practical ways. These men are serious. They are ready to respond everywhere to this friendly and constructive initiative and guidance. They present a really wonderful opportunity for an intensive service to body, mind and spirit. One may also well raise the question whether there is anything which we can do in this tragic hour to prepare the way for better relations after the War than to befriend these men and to serve them in the hour of their greatest loneliness and strain.

In view of this widening of opportunity we wish to increase the amount of the fund to at least \$250,000. We have secured thus far one pledge of \$25,000, one pledge of \$10,000, and twelve pledges of \$5,000 each. The vacation is upon us. I have approached by far the larger number of persons whom I had hoped to enlist. The appeals from Germany, Austria, Hungary and France are pressing us to indicate what they can rely upon in the way of financial help from us. There is every reason why we should give the authorization as soon as possible. I write therefore to request that you kindly secure for us, if possible, a pledge of \$25,000 toward the total of at least \$250,000. With your permission I would like to have it understood that whatever you subscribe be devoted to the work in the military prison camps because that now presents to us the largest and most urgent opportunity.

I will not take your time to repeat what I said about the marked success which we have had in getting the friends in England to provide all the money needed for the work among the 2,000,000 and more of their own soldiers in the training camps, hospitals and trenches, or about the similar success in getting the Associations in Germany to provide for the expenses of the Association work among the soldiers who are in training or in hospitals and trenches. Our fund is primarily to provide for the expense of the work in the prison camps of all countries.

If I can afford information on any other important point, kindly let me know.

With the earnest hope that you may be able soon to send me a favorable response and with the renewed expression of my conviction that in all these years I have known of no more genuine and significant opportunity and of no more practical plan of meeting it.

Very sincerely yours,

John R. Mott

Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.,
26 Broadway,
New York City.