

The Central Committee
of Members of the National Assembly
for Relief of Distress caused by War

No 1319.

February 9/22nd 1915.

Nish, Serbia

To Messieurs

Ernest P. Bicknell, Henry James, Jr., Colin Clark,
Members of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York

In conformity with the oral discussions and conversations held between the highly esteemed Members of the Rockefeller Foundation Mission and the Members of the undersigned Committee, the Central Committee has the honor to present herewith enclosed a Report on the needs and wants of those who were impoverished by wars in the State of Serbia as well as on means by which distress could be relieved.

With the expression of our highest consideration, we beg to remain

The Secretary,
Svetoz. R. Georgievits.

The Vice-President
of the Committee
Sr. L. Timotievits

A S Y N O P S I S

of indispensable means to relieve the present needs and wants of the Serbian population provoked by the war.

Since September 1912 Serbia is well nigh constantly in a state of war. The wars which she had to lead have fundamentally undermined the normal course of all braches of economic industry and exhausted all those sources which up to then served to the upkeeping of national life and the sanitary conditions in the State. The entire male population of the Country has been mobilized and sent to the front. Besides, all the capable live-stock (horses and oxen) have also been mobilized and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ used for military purposes. The entire Country as well as the entire economic industry depended during the entire duration of the wars upon the female population and that small number of males, who on account of their youth, old age, physical or intellectual incapability were unable to serve in the Army. For the performance of agricultural and other works there remained an insignificant number of live-stock, too insufficient and incapable, as unfit for military purposes.

This smaller or greater diminution of production has caused to the larger part of the population a large ^{financial} deficiency. ~~xx~~ This financial deficiency cuppled with the mobilization of the entire capable male working force and the preoccupation of the female population with the field and other works -have ~~xx~~ rendered impossible the supplying and renewing of many indispensable life necessities and working means. This is the reason for the large deficiency in underwear, ⁽¹⁾ clothing & agricultural implements, these last especially. Apart from the several 10.000 ⁽²⁾ disabled, killed and deceased soldiers a great many heads of cattle and horses have died or become ~~disabled~~ incapable for any work. But the same happened to a great deal of Stock-cattle in the Interior because of want of food and neglect, wherefore a large deficiency is felt in working cattle as well as in Stock-cattle(especially mares, cows, and swines).

How is clothing
and underwear -
3.

(2)

On account of war operations the population got so frightened that at the second and especially at the third invasion of the Austro-Hungarian Army, which comprised well nigh ⁽³⁾ 1/5 of the whole Serbian State (within the old limits), the people left their homes and fled to the yet uninvaded parts of the State taking with themselves only what they had on. For fear of revenge the same was done by the Serbian population inhabiting the frontier towns of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Srem, which the Serbian Army had temporarily entered. These refugees number about 50.000 souls. During the war, houses and whole villages have been torn down and pillaged or burnt together with the contents, after everything of any value had been plundered. This is the reason why up to to-day the greater part of the refugees have been unable to return to their homes, but remained in the neighbouring villages which had been spared, but are totally exhausted and poor. There they live in the most miserable way, lacking sufficient food as well as room to abide in and without sufficient cloths, linen, footwear or means to buy it themselves. To these great sufferings there are to be added different contagious diseases & especially typhus and typhoid fever) ravaging among the population and counting up to now many thousands of victims. Many more thousands will succumb to them, for in spite of the best will to relieve the situation, there are neither sufficient competent fighting forces nor means to fight it.

When all the aforesaid woes and wants are taken into consideration it will be clear that the means which are absolutely necessary to soothen them up are manifold and considerable. But there are two principal groups amongst them. In the first ^{enumerated} group are all the means by which the momentary wants for the up-keeping and bettering of life and health of the poor population are to be relieved. The second group contains the means by which the diminished Stock-Supply-Power of the Country is to be raised and thereby the People saved from still worse poverty and wants which in the nearest future would have to ^{inevitably} set in, should the Country remain without them or they be used improperly. Which

are those means it is exposed in the two following groups:

I.

MEANS TO HELP THE MOMENTARY WANTS

1.) As it is impossible to live without sufficient and good food, the necessity for it is the greatest. Especially so for wheat, rye, and all their products, which are used as food; the greatest need for it is felt in the Country places. Though not to a great extent, efficient feeding of the population could very much be helped by importation of milk (condensed or powdered) as well as milk products (butter and cheese). The production of these articles in Serbia has either altogether been stopped or is so insignificant now that the ~~want~~ demand can not by far be supplied to an extent to guaranty the upkeeping or bettering of the life and health conditions of the population.

2.) Apart from food the most necessary things are clothing, especially underwear. These as well as the materials they are made from the Contry is lacking in general and the refugees in particular. To help the hundreds of thousands of poor to get warm clothing and clean underwear means to strenghten their organism and render them more resistful against sickness and exterminate the contagious diseases.

3.) As many families, especially the peasant ones have lost their houses and therefore can not return to their homes and lands to cultivate them, as well as to prevent the agglomeration of families in small uncomfortable houses which would necessitate a state ruinous to the health it would be very useful if for these people there could be built provisory abodes in the shape of wooden barracks or tents. This would be done all the more as we are starting to have warmer days.

4.) As the main thing for the prevention of spreading of contagious diseases is quick separation of the sick from the healthy ones, there are necessary permanent or provisory and easilly transportable field hospitals. As all the permanent hospitals as well as all the buildings adapt to be turned into hospitals

(4)
How to be
distributed

(5) ?

Not all
epidemics
are controlled

(6)

tals have already been taken ~~and are at present occupied~~ by military authorities and are at present occupied by several tens of thousands of wounded soldiers, there remains nothing else but to get the greatest number of provisory and transportable field-hospitals. But the Country has not the necessary material and there is a great deficiency in hospital furniture and material, doctors and nurses, sanitary material and means for desinfection. Almost all that Serbia has had or was able to get in this respect has already been used or is being kept at the disposal of the military authorities for the soldiers, so that there is the greatest need for doctors and nurses ~~and this is~~ as well as the greatest quantity of medicines. To efficaciously combat the contagious diseases it would be necessary to have the largest number of disinfecting apparatuses, machines for ~~the~~ boiling drinking water, pumps for easy and quick finding of underground healthy drinking water, the present source wells being infected and dirty.

II.

MEANS TO RAISE THE PRODUCTIVE POWER AND TO INCREASE THE FUTURE SUPPLY OF THE FOREMOST LIFE PROVISIONS.

1.) It is of the greatest agricultural importance that the coming sowing of spring seeds be done on the largest surface possible and as thoroughly as possible. Even in peace time this was no easy work, as well nigh 3/4 of the total agricultural surface of the Country is cultivated with spring seeds (corn, oats, barley, potatoes etc.). This will be now even more difficult to do as the surface ordinarily cultivated with winterseeds (wheat, rye, barley), has not been attended to. The reason for it is principally the lack of agricultural seeds. ~~Except~~ from the corn seed all other kinds of seeds will have to be largely imported from foreign Countries, if a greater surface is to be attended to. It will be necessary to import at least 60,000.000 kilograms of Potatoes, spring wheat and rye 3,000.000 kilograms each, spring barley 13,000.000 kilograms, oats 12,000.000 kgrs

cattle beets 20.000, sugar beans 30.000 kgrs, Luzern Trifolium 25.000 kgrs., etc. as well as the different kinds of vegetable seeds.

2.) Apart the seeds and for the sake of quicker and easier performance of all agricultural works it is indispensable to have also a contemporary agricultural implements, for these have been -in as much as the Country possessed them- so used up that they are unfit for further use. In those parts where the Austro-Hungarian Army passed a great deal of the same have also purposely been destroyed or damaged so that they can not be used any more. Hereby the greatest damage have suffered the larger machines and especially steam threshers. The greatest want is ~~fe~~ felt in plows in general and in mountain and lighter plows especially, as well as diggers, harrows ~~and~~ cultivators, mowing-machines, harvesting machines and corn planters. If such machines could be had in larger numbers human work could be to a great extent saved which is so much occupied and engaged by the present war. Of especial use would also be Motor-Plows, as they would supplant the overworked cattle and horse power.

are there things usually lost in Germany?

⑧

⑨ In addition to the points 1.) and 2.) it has to be said that the sowing work on account of climatic conditions prevailing all over the State of Servia have to commence at the latest at the end of the month of February o.S. (14. of March n.S.) and to finish at the beginning of May (14. of May n.S.). The mowing is being done in the month of June and the harvest with the beginning of the month of July.

3.) To enable the farmers to perform some of the most necessary things themselves and to secure their necessities out of their own means it would be indispensable to give them the cheapest possible credit. The best intermediaries for this purpose would be the Agricultural (Farmers) Mutual & Cooperative ~~Associations~~ Loan Associations. Their Central Office is now in Nisch. These are founded on an illimited liability basis. Twenty years of their successful existence are the best proof for their creditableness. Besides they are under Government supervision and

are also being subsidised by the same.

+ + +

It is selfunderstood that the needs and wants as well as the different calamities which beset the Servian People have not been the subject of careful investigation only . Public as well as private initiative have done all in their power to alleviate the misery, wants and distress and this they have been doing ever since the outset of the first war. Private help in money as well as in natura has been opulent at the beginning, but it could not keep ~~x~~pace with the ever increasing demand. It can be said that it was exhausted just at the time when it was mostly needed. This was the reason why the State was compelled to take much more interest in helping the population than it at first was able to render. To take care of this most vital necessity a Central Committee of the foremost National Assembly Men was organized. Immediately after this Committee took charge of this humanitarian work a Law was passed in the Skupshtina to relieve the distress of those who had to suffer on account of the wars. By this Law the Committee was not only ^{authorized to continue} ~~confirmed~~ in its duties but also ~~thex~~ its scope widened. Not only that all Authorities were placed at its disposal but also sub-committees were organized -650 of them up to now- which are all working on the same lines of bettering the conditions of the poor and distressed.

But all this has proven to be far from sufficient to relieve the immense wants and needs as the financial means at the disposal of the Committee are out of proportion to the demand. Even the State, being engaged in the defence of its territorial integrity with all ~~theix~~ means at their disposal is unable to attend to all the demands which are confronting it. Therefore any help from whomever it may come whether native or a foreigner ~~is~~ not only welcome now more than ever, but will be received with greatest and never forgetting gratitude.