

There are other committees for the other "Départements" but they are not as large as those mentioned above. Several give "bons" to be spent at the "Vestiaires" of the "Croix-Verte."

It is a part of the duty of all these committees to verify the statements of people who claim to be refugees; and until they have done so such people are not eligible for their "allocations." All the committees keep records of varying interest, and all are willing to show them.

SECOURS NATIONAL

At the beginning of the war the Government sanctioned a committee called the "Secours National" whose duty it is to allot to other organizations both public money voted by the Chamber of Deputies, and privately subscribed money which may be handed to the President of the Republic or to other officials. The usual phrase employed is that the Secours National "subventions" the different organizations.

This is only a meagre list of the "Comités" in existence in Paris; a Directory of Charitable Organizations called "Paris Charitable pendant la Guerre" has been published. It includes hundreds of organizations and is very helpful. As they change their addresses frequently, it is difficult to remain "au courant."

No Red Cross Worker should undertake any form of work without first learning what the French are already doing along the same lines. Again and again it will be found that with our resources of money and energy we can accomplish the aim we seek very much better in working through existing organizations than by starting new ones.

We Americans, who have not borne the sorrows and stress of three years of war, will be impressed constantly by the number of charitable organizations that have sprung into existence to meet the needs and suffering caused by the war. It is no exaggeration to say that there is a society in existence for every form of hardship arising from the war—with the single terrible exception of the sorrow and anxiety which no human aid can overcome. This is even more impressive when one realizes that at the very time when all these unusual and overwhelming needs are forced on the attention of the people of France their ablest minds are necessarily occupied with the defense of the country.

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HINTS FOR AMERICAN RELIEF WORKERS



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LIVRET DE FAMILLE

All French people are given a small official book on the day of their marriage which is called the "Livret de Famille"—sometimes the people call it their "Livret de Mariage." Many useful facts are entered in it, such as the date of the wedding; the age of the man and woman; the maiden name of the woman; and the date of birth and death of all their children. If a child is born before the marriage, it may be recognized or legitimized, which will be entered in the livret.

Very old couples, who married before France had such an intense interest in its possible soldiers, are not provided with livrets.

It is unwise to take for granted that the profession of a man which is entered on the first page of his livret, is still his profession.

A great many facts can be learned directly from the "Livret de Famille"; hence it is wise and customary to ask for it almost at once in making a call of investigation.

LIVRET MILITAIRE

Every soldier has a "Livret Militaire" which gives his military history, and which is useful in looking into his military condition, especially with "réformés."

ALLOCATION MILITAIRE

The French Government pays its common soldiers 25 centimes a day, but it looks out for his family by providing what is called the "Allocation Militaire," which means Frs.1.50 a day for the mother or wife; Frs.1.50 a day for children over sixteen years of age, who for any reason are unable to work; and one franc a day for all children under 16 years of age.

ALLOCATION DES RÉFUGIÉS

The Government has arranged that *refugee* families shall receive help even when they have no father or son at the front, if there is need. This aid is called "Allocation des Réfugiés," and amounts to Frs.1.50 for adults, and one franc for each child.

ALLOCATION BELGE

In addition to the regular allocation which the French Government gives to Belgian *refugees* (which is the same

as that paid to French refugees) the *Belgian* Government is now paying to the *wives of soldiers* an "Indemnité de Logement." This amounts to Frs.30 a month for the head of the family (wife or mother) and Frs.10 for each child under 16; and if there are dependent brothers or sisters of the soldier, a supplementary grant of Frs.10 a month is made.

WAR PENSIONS

The widow of a "simple soldier" gets Frs.580 a year, but it usually takes seven months to arrange for the pension, and if there is any uncertainty about the man's death, the pension is delayed until after the war. The pensions are higher for soldiers of higher rank. The children, half-orphans, who go to the public schools, may receive Frs.15 a month. Most women are not applying for their pensions now as they would receive less than the "allocation militaire," which they are allowed to continue.

RÉFORMÉS

There are two classes of "Réformés" :

"*Réformé n° 1*" means that the man has received a serious injury—in contradistinction to sickness—and is incapacitated for further military service—such injuries as the loss of an eye, a hand, a leg, or even the stiffening of an arm or a leg. He receives a pension varying with his rank and the seriousness of his injury.

"*Réformé n° 2*" means that the man is incapacitated for military service, usually through sickness, such as tuberculosis, heart trouble, or general feebleness. He receives no pension, and has his uniform taken away, usually getting a suit of corduroy in exchange. He is expected to be able to work, and is given preference in "obus" factories.

In either class the man may be "Réformé temporaire" or "Réformé définitif." Both types have to come up for revision at least once a year.

There is a splendid work of re-education, i.e., training the men for a new profession, into which their injuries force them, being done at the Grand-Palais on the Champs-Élysées, and a school for re-educating the blind at the annex of the "Quinze-Vingt" on the Avenue de Reuilly.

MÉDAILLE MILITAIRE

This is given for extraordinary bravery or serious injury, and carries a pension of Frs.100 per year.

MEN WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE AT HOME

The father of five children is not supposed to be at the front. The father of a son who has been killed is not supposed to be at the front. A man who has for his "métier" something mechanical or allied to munitions-making is likely to be in an "usine." The average pay for *men* is Frs.8 a day, but may go as high as Frs.16.

The pay for *women* is from Frs.3.50 to Frs.5 a day.

FAMILLES NOMBREUSES

All over France—this was done even before the war—in order to encourage larger families, the Government gives a grant of Frs.10 a month for each child in families where there are more than three children.

OLD PEOPLE

Throughout France there is a monthly pension for old people called "assistance obligatoire." Its provisions vary somewhat in different places. In *Paris*, anyone over 70 years of age who has lived in *Paris* over five years, can receive a pension of Frs.30 a month. (This obviously cannot apply to refugees who have come to *Paris* since the war; but if they were receiving it from their former homes before the war, they may still be getting it by special arrangements between the local governments and the *Paris* mairie.)

RENT

The Government has passed a law that no family with a member at the front, which is living in the same place since before the war, can be evicted or prosecuted for non-payment of rent. In other words, *Parisians* do not have to pay rent, and refugees do. This has made an enormous difference between residents and refugees in the amount of money left from the allocation to be spent on food and clothing.

The average rent for refugees living in "hôtels"—what we would call "furnished rooms"—is Frs.30 a month or Frs.365 a year for one not very good room. The average rent of an unfurnished lodgement of two or three rooms and a kitchenette is about Frs.300; so the local people are not spared a very large item in their weekly budget by this moratorium, and the refugees have to pay very high for very little.

Since the average rent for refugee families is Frs.30 for one furnished room, it means, if a family is paying much more, either that they have more than one room, or that they have unfurnished rooms and are paying by the "term" of three months.

The price of these unfurnished lodgings varies very

much according to the number of rooms and the locality, but the rent always has to be paid in advance by the term of three months; and in the end this means a very great saving over the abominable, dirty and ill-furnished "hôtel" rooms.

In the spring of 1917 the French Government passed a law providing an "*Indemnité de Loyer*." This is a grant of Frs. 5 per person per month to refugee families, paid upon presentation of the receipted bill for the rent of the preceding month. This has done a great deal towards improving the housing situation and lessening the high cost of living for the refugees. It has on the one hand reassured the landlords that they will be paid, making them much more willing to rent to refugees than formerly; while it has lowered the cost of living by releasing a corresponding sum which can be spent on food.

PUBLIC RELIEF IN PARIS

Paris is divided into 20 Arrondissements—somewhat like American "wards"—each of which is administered in certain details by a Maire.

The "Département de Bienfaisance" has its headquarters for each Arrondissement in the Mairie. The Mairies vary a little in the things they do for their poor people, but the following things are done in all :—

FOR PARISIANS AND REFUGEES (As a rule Paris organizations make no distinction between Refugees and other sufferers.)

FREE COAL.—50 kilos at least four times a year, i.e., in the four winter months.

FREE POTATOES.—4 kilos per person per month.

FREE MEALS for children at the public schools, called "cantines." Paris children may have to pay a sou or two.

FREE MEALS for pregnant women—"Cantine maternelle."

FREE MATERNITY CARE and a meagre layette provided. A pregnant woman receives for 28 days before the expected birth, and for 28 days thereafter, Frs. 1.50 per day; also, if she nurses her child, for 28 days after the birth, 50 centimes a day in addition. Many Mairies also provide *free milk* for several weeks after birth. At the time of birth there is a grant varying from 60 to 100 francs.

FREE DOCTORS who visit in the home if the people are sick in bed; otherwise;

FREE CONSULTATION at the nearest public hospital or dispensary.

FREE MEDICINES for refugees, but not patent medicines, tonics, etc.

CRÈCHE

All over Paris there are "crèches" where a mother can place her baby, up to three years of age, for the day, so that she may go out to work. Children over three years of age can go to school; and now with the "cantines" it is possible for them to stay all day. The more careful mothers, and those with many children—which means a great deal of washing and mending—do not take advantage of this.

COMITÉS

Each "Département" which has been invaded or from which there are refugees, has a semi-official Comité. These Committees were appointed from the members of the Chamber of Deputies and other prominent men of the localities. They vary in methods and efficiency. For instance :—

COMITÉ DU NORD

This committee gives money to soldiers from the "Département" here on permission; sends a great many packages to prisoners, and to men on the front; gives a "bon" of Frs. 5 for each child, and Frs. 10 for every adult, every four months. These bons can be taken to some of the big stores, such as "La Samaritaine," and exchanged for clothing.

COMITÉ DE LA MARNE

The committee gives clothing from its "Vestiaire"; also money in small amounts, usually not over Frs. 15 and generally Frs. 5 at a time.

COMITÉ FRANCO-BELGE

This committee stands in the same relation to the Belgian refugees as the "Comités Départementaux" to the French refugees from the "Pays envahis." It is a very large organization. At one of its offices its business is to establish the fact that people are bona fide refugees from Belgium. It then gives the family an elaborate little book which looks like an English passport. This should always be asked for, as it will have stamped on it an account of *aid received*. The committee gives clothing from its Vestiaire, free meal tickets, free lodging tickets (mostly for single men) and formerly gave money to pay rent. It continues to pay a good deal of rent, but does not take on new families now.