CONDITIONS IN THE CAUCASUS AREA

Mr. Ardashes Garinian, President of the Economic Council of Armenia, called at the Near East Relief Headquarters, Constantinople, Friday, and gave the following statements concerning conditions in the Caucasus.

"If it had not been for the Near East Relief in the Caucasus Area, the children in the orphanages would have starved because we had no food to feed them. The number of Armenian children in the Near East Relief orphanages of the Caucasus Area now exceeds 30,000. We are doing our utmost to gather the children wandering helplessly in the famine-stricken country. A short time ago 800 of these children were turned over to the Near East Relief in Alexandropol. We estimate that there are 20,000 homeless children in the various villages. We cannot give an exact number but we estimate this figure by the population of the famine-stricken communities. Our figures show 100,000 people within Armenia who are flocking to the towns for food. Captain E. A. Yarrow, Director of the Near East Relief, is aiding 50,000 of these refugees. They are chiefly old men, women, and children.

"The Near East Relief is running the orphanages in a systematic and economical manner, and we are much pleased with the training the children are receiving. Each child is taught to be useful so that some day he will be self-supporting. These children owe their lives to the food that America has sent to Armenia.

"The question of fuel will be very serious for the coming winter. There are forests only in the area of Lory. There is no wood supply for Alexandropol and Erivan where many of the large orphanages are located. We are making every effort and using all facilities to transport wood from the forests in the Lory region, but the wood will not begin to be adequate.

"However, the most serious need is food. Somehow the people will manage to find fuel for cooking if they have the food to cook! On account of war, crops were not planted, and all food must be imported. Therefore there will be a very great need for flour and fats this winter if the children are to live. Almost as important as food is the need of clothing. I do not think any one can realize what the bales of old clothes from America have meant to the people of Armenia. Old clothes are worth more than money because they mean warmth. Money cannot buy warmth and food where there is no fuel and where there have been no crops. Each shipment of supplies sent to the Caucasus Area means the saving of lives.

"I am glad to have this opportunity to state what the Near East Relief means to our children in the Caucasus Area."

SUPPLIES FOR THE CAUCASUS

The S. S. "Constantinopoli" is leaving October 30th for Batoum with a cargo for the Caucasus Area. The boat will carry 1338 tons of the 2000 tons food supplies sent on the donation ship, "Esther Dollar." The supplies consist chiefly of flour and dried fruits, and will help fill a cable request from the Caucasus for additional food for the orphanages. In addition to this the "Constantinopoli" will carry 200 tons of supplies made up by local donations from Armenian organizations. These supplies include milk, old clothes, medicines, sugar, and flour. The Armenian donations bear the label "Sent by the Armenian people of Constantinople to Armenia."

Fifty six mules, with harness, and a supply of hay will also sail on the "Constantinopoli" for transportation work in the Caucasus. A number of the last shipment of mules are being used for farming in Alexandropol, and additional mules are required for carrying supplies inland in the Caucasus Area. Mr. Augustus Green is sailing as supercargo with this shipment of supplies, and Dr. Elliott, Miss Lella Priest, Mrs. Mable Powers, and Miss Laura MacFetridge are sailing for work in the Caucasus Area.

Last week the S. S. "Bracciano" carried 450 tons of supplies to the Caucasus Area, consisting chiefly of the cargo from the S. S. "Sagus," a ship arriving from New York two weeks ago. In addition, the "Bracciano" carried local purchases for the Alexandropol orphanages consisting of cloth, olive oil, 3000 cases of milk from the S. S. "Acropolis,“ window glass, groceries for the personnel, and one Case Tractor for farm work.

SIVAS

The Inland Trip

From the moment of leaving Samson, which is the point of entry to Anatolia, and starting the journey into the interior, one feels as if one had entered a new world. On leaving Samson for Sivas, the road is an almost continuous
ascent for the distance of two hundred and fifty miles until Sivas is reached where the altitude is over five thousand feet. The road is a revelation to people accustomed to our American highways. Our Reo truck all but climbed walls. Many times on observing the road ahead, we wondered how we could possibly motor over the coming hill. The road was probably once in a fairly good condition, but now it is very poor. There are deep ruts and many broken places, sharp turns which are dangerous in wet weather, and very steep slopes. To really know these roads, however, one must travel over them after a rain when it seems that every skid is going to send the car over the edge into the valley hundreds of feet below. The mud is of a sticky substance which I believe is unexcelled any place in the world.

Then there is the dry season, as there was when we went into the interior. The dust is so bad that it is hard to decide which is the lesser of the two evils—the dust or the mud. When we arrived at Sivas, after a two days' journey, we were simply white with dust. It seemed to take months to get it thoroughly brushed out of our clothes—even the clothes packed away in our trunks had a generous supply.

These are the difficulties that we recall after making this memorable trip. However there is much that is new and fascinating along the way. Surely a long camel train, numbering perhaps two hundred, winding its way down a slope, or silhouetted against the skyline, is a wonderful sight. Some of the camels are gorgeously decked out in gay trappings—these are usually the leaders. It is amusing to see the man leading the train, preceding these big lumbering beasts on a tiny donkey—the man's feet almost touching the ground. We passed several such trains and many more made up of oxen and waterbuffalo. The oxen and buffalo caravan travel often at night, creaking along in the darkness (as we also do in our automobiles if we have had trouble with the car) while the men sleep on the carts. Many a cart I have seen go "flying" down over the bank because the animals were frightened at theauto. Fortunately the fatalities are few for it is very hard to upset an ox cart.

Sivas has few Trees

We arrived in Sivas in July. By that time the greenness which makes the soving so beautiful is fast disappearing. Here and there may be seen small clumps of trees in this almost treeless district. For the most part, however, one can see only barren mountains with deep shades of red brown and purple which is a scene not to be forgotten.

Sivas itself lies in a sort of basin surrounded by small hills. Viewed from a distance, there are a number of trees in the town, but upon entering the city, one finds them surrounding private dwellings and carefully screened from the public view by blank and ugly walls. Even the American compound can only boast of two or three trees in the rear corner.

Medical Work

I had charge of the Near East Relief hospital in Sivas for over one year. We had one hundred beds constantly full of sick people. Our doctor was an Armenian.

Three times a week we conducted a clinic for 350 to 375 patients. We had a great number of eye cases from our own orphanages to treat. We operated three times a week, and between times in cases of emergency. I have the most sincere admiration for the ability of Dr. Hekimian as a physician and surgeon, his operation for trachoma being the best that I have ever seen.

My hospital work included the direction of servants and supervision of the laundry in addition to the usual responsibility for nurses and patients. This was rather difficult at times owing to our inability to understand each other's language, and I found the laundry an excellent place in which to relieve pent up feelings.

Typhus

This last summer we had typhus, due to refugees entering the city. The sick and dying, with that horrible disease, whom we nursed, were a pitiful sight. Since leaving Sivas, I have heard that there is an epidemic of diptheria there.

Mary L. Graffam

It would be hard to write of Sivas these days and not have in mind many times Miss Mary L. Graffam, missionary there for twenty years, and finally Near East Relief Director. Miss Graffam died this summer. She was a woman of strong personality who made such an impression upon her people, and upon us who worked with her, that it is impossible to realize that she is no longer there. In fact it is impossible to think of Sivas without her. Her death was a terrible blow to the six Americans working with her. She meant so much to all the people and carried the responsibility so much alone that we indeed felt lost when she had finally left us. We ourselves prepared her for burial; her coffin was made in our own shops and lined by several of the girls to whom she had been more than a mother. A death in a foreign country, with only a small group of fellow-countrymen, is a sad, sad experience.

Our task is still unfinished. We cannot give up helping the children to whom we have given a home thus far. The Near East Relief hospital and medical work mean so much to the poor of the community, and the presence of the Americans gives cheer to the people. It would be Miss Graffam's greatest wish that the work should go on as she would have continued it.

Jennie M. Ryan

A NIGHT AT THE NEAR EAST RELIEF FARM AT RODOSTO

(From the diary of a Near East Relief worker)

"October 10th. Our old Ford 'No. 73' which worked faithfully for us in Constantinople for over a year, has been sent to Rodosto, and we are on our way to visit the 16,000 denum farm which the Near East Relief has rented for the Ismid and Adabazar refugees. Two weeks ago 400 Armenian refugees from the region of Adabazar and Is-
mid were taken to this farm and they have been building their own cottages with a cement made of the earth of the
farm and water. The Near East Relief supplied the wood for
the framework of the cottages and the material from the
ruined farmhouses on the land supplied the tile for the roofs.

"There is not a tree to obstruct the view and we can see for
miles over the undulating country. In the distance, silhouetted
against the sky, a peasant, with an ox team, is ploughing. Our
 caravan of oxen and buffalo carts, carrying the women and children of seventy-five refugee families, is
ahead of us. They are going to join the men who are pre-
paring homes for them on the farm. This caravan has been
on its way since early morning and it will probably be night
before the slow oxen and buffalo reach the farm.

"Breakdown! Old '73' is not familiar with country
ways and roads. We thought we would soon overtake the
buffalo and oxen but it seems that slow and steady will win
the race.

"Off again in rather a creaky fashion! We have a huge
hill ahead and we are not optimistic about making it. Stepan
states the tank is leaking. There is certainly a leak some-
where and we must take Stepan's word for it. There is a
village ahead where he hopes to make repairs and procure
water at the fountain.

"At the village! Stepan has taken the Ford apart and
we have time to look around. The interior workings of '73'
are spread over the ground and the villagers, who know
nothing of automobiles, are grouped about them. They look at
Stepan as if he is wizard to be able to put a 'horseless
wagon' together so that it will carry people up a hill. Stepan
started the engine going and one man ran away as fast as his
legs could carry him. We sophisticated foreigners do not
share their optimism concerning Stepan's magic powers on
'73' so we are taking a stroll around the village. This place
was originally one farm but it kept enlarging and gradu-
ally grew to be a village. There is a tiny coffee house where
old farmers are sitting smoking their 'bubble, bubble
pipes' or 'nargilas'. The coffee house, which is likewise a
barber shop, is their only diversion. The women find
their amusement at the village fountain where they gossip when
they go to carry water. The houses are mud huts of one
room.

"Off again! In the distance we can see Tchorlou, a town
on the railroad, twenty-five miles away. The country seems
full of turtles. Shells of dead turtles can be seen lying about
in the sun. We have just passed a silver fox eating a wild
duck. He was only about ten yards from us but did not seem
to be afraid.

"Breakdown! The doctor who is going to the farm to
hold a clinic is becoming impatient. Stepan will be an au-
tomobile expert driving a car on these rough roads. There
is not a house, a tree, or a person in sight. We seem to be
in a sea of undulating hills. On one side are the trenches
used in the Bulgarian war. It is said that robbers used to
hide in these trenches and hold up caravans at night. At

present, however, the country of Thrace is peaceful and order
prevails.

"We have been on our way twenty minutes without a
breakdown and we can see the Near East Relief farm below us
in a fertile valley. There is a clump of trees near the
cottages. The buildings are in the centre of the 16,000 de-
nums of rich land. We can see our ex-refugees still working
in the fields preparing the land for crops although it is now
after sundown.

"At the farm! We are surrounded by people running out
to greet us. When we ask them how they like the farm,
they answer, "Chok eyi" (very good). They are justly proud
of the little huts they have built in a quadrangle about a
central court. The look of 'refugee' has slipped from them.
They have become hard working farm people with a pride in
their work. Old women dressed in huge baggy trousers,
young women in gay colors, children in American clothes,
surround us. The old clothes bags of America are changing
the costumes of the peasants of the Near East. Many of the
children look like little American children in the clothes we
have given them. One old woman kissed the American flag
on our Ford. It is growing late and the doctor must still
hold his clinic."

The Farm Clinic

"The doctor took the Director's room, and one by one
the sick people of the farm came to him for medical advice.
First a child of twelve, a mere skeleton, came up the stairway.
She complained of weak knees. Her mother stood beside
her and helped to hold her up. The doctor tested her lungs
and heart and gave the verdict, 'tuberculosis in both lungs
and heart trouble.' She must have rest and plenty of milk.
We wrote an order for milk from the Near East supplies.
She contracted tuberculosis from the life at a refugee camp.
She at least is better off on the farm.

"Now a mother is here with a sick three-year-old baby.
The baby has no appetite and has fever. The doctor says it
is tonsillitis and tells the mother what to do. Next is a little boy
with a pain in his stomach whom the doctor dismisses as not
dangerously ill. One child has scabies and the doctor gives
out salve. They keep coming until the room had to be lighted
with an oil lamp. There were about fifty patients in all.

"Night! The doctor has just finished the clinic and it
is nearly nine o'clock. Happily it is a bright moonlight
night. However, as the road back to Rodosto is but a cow-
path in places, and '73' is in a shaky condition, we have
decided to spend the night at the refugee farm. Mr. Dicran
Ohanesian informed the refugees that we would remain and
they assured us that they could give us food. The Near East
Relief is supplying the food for the farm until the crops come
in next year and these people become independent. It
is much better than doing the same feeding in a camp.

"We are walking about the farm, calling on the families
in the little huts, sitting with them before their evening fires.
For the first time in months and months they are happy and
have their own little room instead of merely the space the
size of a blanket in a camp."
"In front of each house there are piles of knotted wood. The men proudly told us that they had dug the roots from the earth. These were the roots of the trees cut down during the war. We passed various huts in the process of construction, women and men working together in the moonlight, the women placing the stones and using the soft clay as mortar to keep them in place. We came to the row of huts which the men were preparing for the long caravan of women and children which we had passed on the way. Each little hut was clean. The mat the Near East Relief has supplied was on the floor and a fire was burning in the clay fireplace. I have never seen a crowd of happier men than these ex-refugees who built with their own hands a home for their wives and children after months and months of wandering and refugee camp life.

"Dinner! We are the guests of the refugees. The tables have turned. I wonder how long ago it is since these women prepared for guests. A tin tray, made of a hammered out gasoline tin, was sent to us in the Director’s hut on which was one of their few precious chickens. There was toasted bread from their own oven, and Turkish coffee. From somewhere, perhaps treasured by one of the women, came three tiny china coffee cups. We placed the tray on an empty box which once held American soap. The tiny oil lamp lighted the little room. We never enjoyed food more because we were tired and hungry. After the meal, in the oriental way, they brought a basin and poured water over our hands. We were their guests and they had given us their best.

"Then a great commotion took place in the camp. Every one ran outside the quadrangle. The caravan of new inhabitants was arriving. We saw the buffalo and oxen slowly pull the wagons down the hill in the moonlight, and we saw the husbands and brothers rush out to greet their families whom they had left ten days before. We went over to see if the little huts were ready. We found the fires brightly burning and the rooms clean, and the evening meal was cooking. There were shouts of joy and also a few tears when the women and children entered the little cottages. They were home again in huts which their husbands and brothers had built, splitting the wood, lifting the beams by hand, mixing the clay, hunting the stones, and building the walls.

"We left the families settling and went back to the Director’s hut.

"Mr. Peter Prins and Miss M. L. Caldwell, the Near East Relief workers at Rodosto, are doing a good piece of work in procuring these farms and settling the refugees. Another farm is being settled, and the refugees in the camps are begging for a chance to follow. The people are proving worth helping because they are so eager to help themselves. I only hope we can keep these home fires burning until the crops come in."

CONSTANTINOPLE ORPHANS COLLECTING FUNDS FOR CAUCASUS

The Armenian papers state that the orphans and workers of the Constantinople Armenian orphanages are taking up a collection for their brothers and sisters of the Caucasus Aerea who are in a starving condition.

November “Old Clothes Month”

November is to be “old clothes month” for the Armenian families of Constantinople. Each family is urgently requested by the Armenian Central Committee to give every garment they can spare for the famine-sticken areas of Armenia.

PERSONNEL NOTES

Mr. H. C. Jaquith, Managing Director of the Anatolia Area of the Near East Relief, left Monday evening, October 24th, for the Caucasus Aerea.

Mr. George White is Acting Managing Director during Mr. Jaquith’s absence.

Mr. Augustus Green is sailing October 30th with a shipment of supplies for Batoun. Mr. Green will return to Samsoun where he is to be connected with the Samsoun Near East Relief Unit.

Doctor Elliott, Miss Leila Priest, Mrs. Mable Powers, and Miss Laura MacFetridge are sailing on the “Constantinopili” Monday, October 29th, for work in the Caucasus Aerea. Dr. Elliott, Miss Priest and Mrs. Powers will be connected with the work of the medical department in Erivan, and Miss MacFetridge is to be assigned to Alexandropol. Miss Ruth Eddy has been assigned to the Sivas Unit. She will leave shortly for Samsoun.

Mr. Donald Hosford sailed October 22nd for the United States. He is returning to the United States via Italy.

Mr. George Dennis is in Rodosto aiding Mr. Peter Prins in negotiating for additional farmland for the Rodosto refugees.

A party of six new personnel are sailing from New York to Constantinople on the “America”. The party is expected Sunday, October 30th.

Each Monday afternoon at five o’clock the Near East Relief personnel will be at home to receive their friends at 19 Rue-Telegraph, Pera.

Mrs. G. Bie Ravndal is aiding Mrs. Emrich in work on the Case Committee.

Mr. Joseph Beach, formerly, Director of the Cesarea Unit, is temporarily holding a position in the New York office. Mr. and Mrs. Beach expect to return shortly to the Near East.