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Toledo Library  
Toledo, Ohio

FROM DONALD A. LOWRIE, OUR REPRESENTATIVE IN MARSEILLE

In the valley behind Nice we found a group of buildings used before the war by a private school - just the place for a children's colony.

As fast as permission could be secured we took 80 Czechoslovak children from various camps and put them here under the care of Czech teachers and nurses. I had seen some of them in camps - undernourished, threatened by disease and the immorality of lacking privacy behind the barbed wire. The difference in their looks now is almost unbelievable. . . . .

To provide food for the school and to employ some of their parents, we leased a farm a few miles away across the valley. It now accommodates 25 people, five cows, goats, chickens, rabbits. The gardens are so extensive that they keep a dozen people busy.

Up the valley from the school are a group of farms which have been uncultivated for 40 years. We leased a large section of the wilderness for 9 years - rent free - and turned loose a "reconstruction team". Roofless ruins have been turned into livable houses, an irrigation canal has been extended over a mile to bring water to the terraces down the hillsides. Terrace-walls have been rebuilt, brush cleared and the soil turned by hand.

By claiming government funds for this reclamation work, 25 men are earning their living here now. As soon as crops come in, the farms will support 30 more families, whom we shall take out of the internment camps. Czech frugality has made a big impression, even on the frugal French. The remains of a wire fence served to repair broken-down beds. Fuel was obtained in payment for clearing land after a forest fire, and this in a land where the finest hotels in Nice cannot afford to have hot water.

Then there are our four farms in the Correze. These were not quite jungle when we leased them, but the houses had not been lived in for ten years. There was a lake 3 feet deep in the cellar of one house, and 80 panes of glass were missing. They cook at the fireplace in the great hall, of a house built in 1813.

In the past three months these farms have been put in shape to support over 200 men. They put in 1,000 cabbage plants, and you should have seen the crop - greatly to the surprise of their French neighbors, who insisted that cabbage would not grow here. They are gradually buying up cows, sheep, rabbit and chickens to stock the places on a big scale.

Electric light and power have been installed. The rooms are all newly calcimined, windows and doors painted - though it is a miracle where they bought the paint in this land where nothing of that sort is obtainable. Their wood-burning tractor is one of six in the whole district, and will do double duty. They have dug a run-way into the half-basement of one of the houses, where the tractor will provide power during the winter for a turning lathe and other woodworking tools. I have promised to purchase all the furniture they can make for use in the internment camps.

World War, 1939-  
France.  
PAMPHLET OFFICE