

STARTING CAMP FOR POW LABOR

Construction of the German prisoner of war camp near Eaton will begin Monday when the initial contingent of about fifty men arrive to start building the camp to house the others to come later, it was announced yesterday by Capt. Wesley Jones, public relations officer of Camp Atterbury.

About 600 prisoners will be brought to Eaton to help harvest tomatoes and work in canning factories. The camp will serve an area of a thirty or forty-mile radius. The campsite consists of a seventeen-acre field adjacent to the Eaton Canning Company. The prisoners will live in tents.

Work Throughout Area.

Captain Jones expects work on the camp to be completed by the middle of August. Additional prisoners will be brought to the camp soon after its completion, as their use is certified by the War Manpower Commission. The maximum of 600 will probably be reached about the first of September, according to Jones. Ralph Butterfield, manager of the Eaton Canning Company, said the negotiations were being made through the WMC for clearance on a larger number of prisoners to be brought from other base camps to fill the needs of this area.

This is the fifth such camp in Indiana, others are already or soon to be established at Windfall, Austin, Morristown and Vincennes. Brig. Gen. Ernest A. Bixby, commanding general of Camp Atterbury, the base camp, emphasized that it has always been the policy of the War Department not to use a prisoner of war on any job for which civilian labor is available.

"The war prisoners are sent to the communities at the request of local citizens," General Bixby said. "Before a private contractor is permitted to employ prisoners of war, the contractor must obtain from the War Manpower Commission a certificate that civilian labor is not available. Requests for work on farms is made by the State Superintendent of Emergency Farm Labor." First requests made by farmers will be through M. E. Cromer, county agricultural agent. Farmers or contractors never deal directly with the army authorities at the camp.

Few Prisoners Escape.

The general also stressed that all unemployed person should apply for work at the local office of the United States Employment Service, which, if no work in his trade is available, will so certify to the prisoner of war camp commander, Col. John L. Gammel, who will take any prisoner of war from any job for which a civilian is available and qualified.

Capt. Jones said that there was no cause for fear of the prisoners. He stated that the proportional rate of escape of war prisoners was less than that of inmates in the closely-guarded federal penitentiaries.

Contrary to some stories, Captain Jones reports that German prisoners are not being given any butter, sugar, choice cuts of meat or any other scarce commodities. They work hard and live under strict discipline, he said.

The PW's do not have a standard working day but work at least eight hours each day and the prevailing wage rate of the vicinity is paid to the U. S. Treasury Department by the canner or farmer employing them. Of this amount, as is stipulated by the Geneva convention, the government pays to the prisoner of war eighty cents per day. The difference between this sum and the total amount he earns goes into the U. S. Treasury. Captain Jones said that more than

\$2,000,000 will be added to the treasury this year from the labors of Atterbury PW's alone.

Over half the prisoners at Camp Atterbury are or will be working from side camps such as this one. Those remaining at Atterbury similarly work in an area within fifty miles of the camp.

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