

No. 1471

Exh. 1471

DOCUMENT 10-E

Plain

Bern

Dated February 24, 1942

Rec'd 7:29 p.m.

SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

733, twenty-fourth.

AMERICAN INTERESTS, JAPAN.

Swiss Foreign Office note February 19 advises it called attention Swiss Minister Tokyo to contradictions existing in reports of treatment accorded Americans in Japanese occupied territory (see Legation's 514, February 11) and Minister replied by telegram February 17.

Minister states that he consulted with Swiss Charge d'Affaires Shanghai regarding other representations to be made to Japanese Government. He then says "Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent me new note declaring Japan will apply on condition of reciprocity Geneva Convention for treatment prisoners of war and civilian internees in so far as convention shall be applicable, and that they shall not be forced to perform labor against their will. American civilians detained in all Japanese territories number 134. Conditions applied to them are more favorable than contemplated by convention. Their provisioning in bread, butter, eggs, meat, heating oil, coal and fats assured by Japan. They can receive from outside gifts of food and clothing. Despite inconvenience which arrangement presents Japan they are specially detained in vicinity of residence of their families in order that latter can see them more easily. Internees are visited from time to time by doctor and sick persons can consult doctor from outside and obtain admission subsequently to hospital. They are permitted to read papers, books,

Serial #3
Pages 19-21

and listen to Japanese radio and to go out subject to certain restrictions if they submit valid reasons."

Minister continues that such statements must be verified on spot but that he has not yet been able obtain requested permission for regular visits by his special representative at Tokyo and at Yokohama. Promises are continually made. Upon two visits which were made to Tokyo and one to Yokohama internees did not complain but gave rather impression of mental suffering. Minister finally adds "as for reports from other cities in Japan I have again insisted that my delegates be allowed to verify internees living conditions. Until now I have had no particular information. I do not see necessarily any contradiction between this situation and that reported in China where the internees may be worse treated. Foreign Ministry assures me Japan will do all in its power to extend good treatment but is not in a position to offer standard of living equal to that of American for conditions between two countries are so different. Japanese people are poor and contented with little from which facts arise difficulties concerning treatment of foreign internees. Regarding noninterned Americans situation good according to their own statements. Assure American Government that I am attentively following question both with Foreign Office and with my representatives."

HUDDLE

and listen to Japanese radio and to go out subject to certain restrictions if they submit valid reasons."

Minister continues that such statements must be verified on spot but that he has not yet been able obtain requested permission for regular visits by his special representative at Tokyo and at Yokohama. Promises are continually made. Upon two visits which were made to Tokyo and one to Yokohama internees did not complain but gave rather impression of mental suffering. Minister finally adds "as for reports from other cities in Japan I have again insisted that my delegates be allowed to verify internees living conditions. Until now I have had no particular information. I do not see necessarily any contradiction between this situation and that reported in China where the internees may be worse treated. Foreign Ministry assures me Japan will do all in its power to extend good treatment but is not in a position to offer standard of living equal to that of American for conditions between two countries are so different. Japanese people are poor and contented with little from which facts arise difficulties concerning treatment of foreign internees. Regarding noninterned Americans situation good according to their own statements. Assure American Government that I am attentively following question both with Foreign Office and with my representatives."

HUDDLE