

BRITISH EMPIRE WAR RELIEF FUND

(To Combat Disease and Distress in War-
stricken Areas in Europe and Asia)



REPORT of a Speech Upon European Conditions

By
MR. HERBERT HOOVER

ISSUED BY
The Canadian Red Cross Society
TORONTO

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EUROPE'S TRIANGLE OF SUFFERING



THE Canadian Appeal on behalf of the British Empire War Relief Fund to combat disease and distress in Europe was launched October 16th, when Mr. Herbert Hoover at the invitation of the Canadian Red Cross Society, gave an address upon European conditions to a gathering in Toronto.

The following letter from His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada was read by Dr. J. W. Robertson, Chairman of the Executive:

"I am especially sorry I shall not be there, as I should have been glad to have availed myself of the opportunity of joining with my colleagues on the Council of the Red Cross Society in the expression of our admiration of Mr. Hoover's splendid services (Applause), and at the same time of supporting him in his great work on behalf of the suffering people in Europe. The demands on the generosity of the people of Canada are increasingly heavy, but I am confident that when the horrors and misery of the conditions now prevailing are appreciated they will in characteristic manner make a determined effort to bring as great a degree of assistance as lies in their power."

Mr. Hoover upon being introduced by the Chairman, Col. Noel Marshall, was received with great applause, and spoke as follows:

"My good friends, I could not refuse the urgent invitation of my long colleague, Dr. Robertson—I had

owed him a debt of affection and admiration for which this is but little return. I had felt some embarrassment otherwise, lest my presence should be interpreted in Canada in urging the Canadian people to further sacrifice. I realize that the sacrifice of the Canadian people, individual by individual, has been far in excess of that of our own people; and it is not for us to ask further service from Canada. I would indeed be glad, had I the worth and the ability, to give expression to the admiration that I feel in my heart for the sacrifice of the Canadian people over those long six years of terror and misery. I know that the charity of the Canadian heart is inexhaustible, and that you will not resent my coming to discuss with you the problems that the Western Hemisphere must front towards the East. We are endeavoring to do our part, and what we are able to do is insufficient to compass the problem.

"To me the greatest problem of the human heart in the world to-day is this problem of a myriad of waifs and orphans, hungry children, through Eastern and Central Europe. The slaughter of fifteen millions of men could not but have left millions of helpless waif and orphan, hungry children, in its track; and upon their well-being must depend the upbuilding of Europe. All of the great Allied countries are, in the main, able to take care of their own, and the most poignant problem of the whole world lies in that area from Finland through Western Latvia and Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, a little in Roumania and Serbia. In many countries it is a triple problem; it is a problem of famine in food needed for children and it is a problem in family destruction, and it is a problem in destitution beyond the ability of the State to find resource in remedy. There are literally millions of those children in those populations sunk so low in destitution that they cannot be absorbed. They must receive extraordinary assistance.

"The great famine upon which the war collapsed, which had reached its maximum intensity in the winter of 1919, has left many echoes, and these echoes particularly affect the children again. The first stage of famine is the diversion of food from the animals to the men; the second stage of famine is the destruction of the animals; and the children of the white races are dependent for their physical well-being upon our animals.

"It will be years and years before the restoration of cattle in Eastern and Central Europe will provide the fundamental food necessary for the well-being and upbuilding of their children. Therefore, although the great famine has been fought and won, there still

remains this strain of famine upon the children. Nor had these States sufficient resources, either in credit or commodities, with which to find exchange for the importation of milk and fats for their children. Such food supplies as they possess are, in the main, sufficient for their adults, but it is the children that suffer from famine to-day.

"We have here a population of some 200,000,000 of people. At the Armistice the organization of this great mass of humanity was placed in the hands of a committee that they might be provided with economic resources, with food, to tide them over the winter of 1919. Provisions were made through the support of each of the Allied Governments. A committee was set up in which Dr. Robertson and I had the honor to serve. The measures that were taken were successful, and the famine was prevented—a famine of greater dimensions than that which followed the Thirty Years' War was prevented. And after that war this same area of Europe had within a twelve months lost one-half its population. But amongst the measures that were adopted at that time to meet the issue was an attempt to organize the care of this great mass of helpless children. We sent into every capital of Eastern and Central Europe, called together the most stable men and women, organized an association among their own people, gave them support, both moral and financial, to enable them to compass the entire child problem amongst their own people. These associations took the virtual control of their orphan asylums, of children's hospitals; established sub-committees in every town, village, and community; opened kitchens for the feeding of the hungry; opened homes for the orphans. One of the conditions that we made in every case was that the entire staff and personnel should be furnished by them from their own people, and that their own local charities, their Governments and their municipalities, should provide every penny of local expenditure and we should confine ourselves to the necessary imports. We undertook this form of our organization because we were uncertain how long we could go on under the tremendous strain. But further than that, and infinitely more important, we wished to build up an organization in each country that could carry their children through with the gradual recuperation of their state. In the winter of 1919 we reached a maximum of 6,000,000 children.

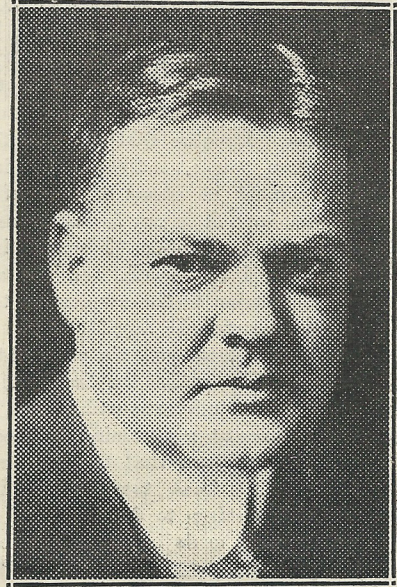
"In the summer of 1919 Governmental aid and the organization of the Allied Governments to tide over the winter came to an end. It was then that my colleagues and myself converted the American share of that organization into a volunteer body in an endeavor to carry forward over the last winter. Similar voluntary organizations were created in England, in France, and in Italy; and although, especially in Italy and France, their misery has been of no moderate degree, they have yet found something for Eastern and Central Europe. (Applause.)

"Through the existing organizations we have a common funnel through which we can pour support without waste and without duplication. We have found by experience that the cost of caring for a waif child is approximately three dollars a month; that of the supplies that are required by imports, about one dollar is needed; and therefore the dollar that we provide, together with the local support—local Governments, local municipalities, local charities, and local services, practically preserves the life of one child. It is not much of a sum—one dollar per month per child—and although the calls may be very considerable upon your people and upon ours, we still have something after we have cared for our children and our neighbors' children. (Applause.)

"Our present problem over the forthcoming winter appears to be about 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 children. The strength of the local associations is increasing with increasing resources in each country. We feel that if we could find amongst all the nations \$4,000,000 a month we could solve this problem. Surely it is not much for the whole world to find. It is a heavy burden for charity, but it is so appealing in its necessity that I have no doubt that charity will find it. These children are the obligation of every man and woman in the Western Hemisphere, for we have suffered less; but beyond this, they are a charge on the heart of the entire world. This is the real flotsam, it is the real wastage, from the war. This mass of undernourished, underclad, mentally and morally and physically destitute children must twenty years from now furnish the foundation of civilization in Europe; and if we are to preserve the foundations for stability, if we are to keep open the love of humanity, our duty is clear before us. I bespeak your co-operation." (Loud applause.)

Dr. John L. Todd, a Professor of McGill University, who had been conducting typhus research work in Poland, gave a description of that country and its people. He referred to the determined struggle of the Poles for freedom, a struggle which had lasted for centuries against foes on every side. He said that the population is ravaged with typhus and the danger of infection therefrom is so great that patients often have to be left unattended until they can be conveyed to an area where they can be looked after with safety to the attendants. This precaution is necessary as the helpers are so few and the patients so numerous that all precautions must be taken to preserve to the people the services of the few doctors available. Dr. Todd concluded by saying:

"Humanity demands of us that we help these people; expediency insists that we help the Allies who are protecting us from the dangers that lie beyond."



MR. HERBERT HOOVER

Canadian contributions towards the British Empire War Relief Fund to combat distress and disease in Europe should be forwarded to the local branch of the Canadian Red Cross where such exists or to the Provincial Divisions of the Canadian Red Cross Society as follows:

BRITISH COLUMBIA—

Miss E. Barnes,
626 Pender St. W., Vancouver, B.C.

ALBERTA—

Mrs. C. B. Waagen,
O'Sullivan Block, Calgary, Alta.

SASKATCHEWAN—

W. F. Kerr,
Red Cross Lodge, Regina, Sask.

MANITOBA—

G. J. Seale,
Kennedy Bld.,
315 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Man.

ONTARIO—

A. M. Miller,
410 Sherbourne St., Toronto, Ont.

QUEBEC—

Major J. F. Buckley,
45 Belmont Park, Montreal, P.Q.

NOVA SCOTIA—

Mrs. D. S. McIntosh,
314 Barrington St., Halifax, N.S.

NEW BRUNSWICK—

Miss Ethel Jarvis,
143 Duke St., St. John, N.B.

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