

The Three Christmasses in Santo Tomas

By A. V. H. Hartendorp

1942

CHRISTMAS in the Camp; the First "Movie" — Had anyone during the first half of the year of internment hinted that the internees might possibly have to spend Christmas of 1942 in the camp, he would have been mobbed. But in spite of the mental depression resulting from the continuing captivity, it was, under the circumstances, a good Christmas. This was in large part due to the efforts, begun months in advance, of hundreds of brave people who determined to do what they could to create a real Christmas atmosphere and feeling in the camp, and they fully succeeded.

Carpenters, electricians, and other men with a knack for tools worked for months at making all sorts of toys, — doll-beds and other toy-furniture, miniature trains, tumbling-toys, tops, and practical wagons, wheelbarrows, scooters, stilts, etc., all brightly painted. The women labored as hard at making rag-dolls. Over 1400 toys were gotten ready and were distributed to excited and happy children on the afternoon of Christmas Day around a big, decorated Baguio pine tree which was set up between the annex and the old hospital. Teachers, preachers, actors, singers, a circus magician, all worked together to produce a number of enjoyable concerts, plays, and shows. There was even a puppet-show.

One of the happiest events for many in the camp was foretold in the minutes of the internee Executive Committee meeting of December 18:

"The Chairman¹ stated he had finally been able to obtain permission for wives and children of internees residing outside the camp to visit their husbands [and fathers] Christmas morning between the hours of 9:30 and 12 noon under certain definite restrictions."

The room monitors began right away to take down the names of people whose admission was requested, — wives, children, grandchildren... but sons- and daughters-in-law, No. Perhaps the latter could be smuggled in with the others. Some were, when the time came, through the efforts of the internee-guards at the gate.

Attractively-wrapped gifts from friends outside began to come into the camp through the Package-Line as much as a week in advance of Christmas, — cigars, cigarettes, cakes, books, the latter bearing the censor's rubber stamp: "Examined by the Office of Japanese Military Administration."

On Tuesday evening, the 22nd, a joint chorus of men and women, under the direction of Krutz and Osbon, presented a program of Christmas carols, sung in the open air in the square in front of the main building. A Japanese plane, probably attracted by the light cast on the singers by a row of foot-lights, flew over the camp several times, coming down quite low. One man was heard to say, "There's a Nip in the air!" The last song was "Holy Night." The plane had gone away, and the song, floating on the cool December night, transported many a man

and woman in the audience of several thousand people to homes and fire-sides far away.

On the night of the 23rd, the internees attended a showing of the first moving-pictures in the camp, in the same square. The picture, "The Feminine Touch," was second-rate, but it was good to see some views of civilized life again and some decent interiors, with no more than two beds, or a reasonable number of people, in one room. "By order," a Japanese propaganda picture was shown first, which gave point to the preliminary announcement over the loud-speaker that the Commandant has asked that the audience refrain from *applauding* any part of the program. The Japanese film was a "sports-short," showing Japanese children and youths at various games and mass-exercises. It was accompanied by music and the voice of a girl narrator speaking in English in the thin, childish treble which seems to appeal to the Japanese. There was nothing objectionable in the film except the lying title flashed on the screen in big letters, "Toward a Free Asia." The close-ups of the faces of the groups of smiling children were well chosen. The picture ended with a view of a torch-light parade, and at the close, in an effort at artistry, flames filled the entire screen. This suggested a very likely ending for Japan itself.² One could not help but curse in one's heart the men whose criminal aggressions were certain to bring misery and death upon the innocent children shown in the film, as they had already brought misery and death to the people of other lands.

The next day there was a Christmas program for the children in front of the annex, — songs and dances by a number of little boys and girls, puzzling and amusing tricks by an internee "magician," and a marionette-show, — of a good little boy, Santa Claus, and the Virgin Mary. That night, an abbreviated version of Dickens' "Christmas Carol" was read and more Christmas songs were sung.

The First Visiting Day — On Christmas Day, every one was up very early. Many attended the open-air mass celebrated on the campus before dawn, or the Anglican communion service in the Fathers Garden. At the Package-Line that morning, all records were exceeded. After the putting up of the inner sawale fence in October, the average daily number of people coming to the line had dropped to around 600, but on the day before Christmas, some 1900 people filed in to bring packages, and on Christmas Day no less than 2900 people, bringing some 6000 packages. The tons of gifts included not only over 100 roast turkeys, but scores of whole roast pigs, in the form known to the Filipinos as *lechon*. Many Manilans were later reported to have stood outside the camp to watch this spectacle. The Japanese were too astounded to be immediately indignant at this new demonstration of friendship and loyalty.

The visitors began to come in at 9:30, at first with agonizing slowness as the Japanese checked their names against the lists they held. Only some 50 or 60 had been allowed to pass through the inner gate after the first half-hour, but later the process

¹(Excerpts from a still unpublished history of the Santo Tomas Internment Camp and of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.)

²C. C. Grinnell.

³Truer than the writer knew at that time.

was speeded up a little. Many of the visitors, however, had only a few minutes within the camp before they had to go out again, for the order was that they had to begin leaving at 11:30 and had all to be gone by noon. Nevertheless, there were many happy family reunions for the first time in a year, for this was the only general visiting day the Japanese in their "kindness" did set, and even on this occasion visitors were limited to immediate family members. Some 700 visitors were admitted.

The usual breakfast of milkless corn-mush and black coffee was enriched that morning with a spoonful of stewed dried fruit, and that night there was a "pudding" extra. Many people that day and the next did not go to the food-line, but feasted on the good things that had been sent in to them or on the delicacies in the Red Cross package from South Africa, which had been distributed, as already related,³ on the 23rd.

It was a good Christmas, as good as it could possibly have been. In contrast, very little was made in the camp of New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. On the 31st, lights went out at 10:30 as usual, and few people sat up until midnight, as they might have done if they had wanted to, to see the new year "come in." Many a man and woman, however, lay awake in bed that night until one solitary siren down-town sounded for several minutes and a few fire-crackers were exploded in the neighborhood. The year 1942 in the Philippines had begun in terror and ended with no semblance of celebration by any but some of the Japanese, perhaps. The people of the Philippines, within and outside the camp, were only waiting, waiting for the relief that had been promised, praying for it. Though they were sure it would come, it was so slow in coming! It had been a year, a whole year, of death and loss, of grief and fear, of deprivation and misery and humiliation. How much longer was it to last?

1943

NO VISITING—Christmas, 1943, the second Christmas Day spent in Santo Tomas, was a day of disappointment for the camp because the family visiting, allowed on Christmas morning of 1942, and looked forward to for a whole year by thousands of people in the camp and their relatives and friends outside, was ruled not to be "practical" by Commandant Kato.

The Executive Committee and Robb, for the internees with non-interred families, worked for a change in the Commandant's decision until Christmas morning, and hundreds of wives and children outside, although they had already learned the bad news earlier in the week from the men working at the Package-Line, came anyway in the hope of a last-minute concession, but they were turned away, many of them weeping bitterly.

Yet "special visits" were "granted" between the hours from 9 to 3 on both December 26 and January 2 to "civil prisoners" in the New Bilibid Prison at Muntinlupa and the Correctional Institute for Women, at Mandaluyong. According to the announcement in the Tribune (of December 23), the visitors were "allowed to bring cooked foods and to lunch with the prisoners."

The Santo Tomas internees and their wives and children outside were not thus favored. There were some small holes in the inner sawale fence through

which internees sometimes sneaked a look at their loved ones as they came in to deliver their packages, but on Christmas morning the people from the outside were not even allowed to enter the main gate and had to stop there and hand their packages over. The inner gate was now and again opened to let through some official or a carromata loaded with camp supplies, and then the internees within and the people at the front gate and across the street would stand on their toes and crane their necks in the hope of getting a fleeting glimpse of their loved ones, but it was hard to pick out even a familiar face and figure at such a distance. The older men in the camp would try to get to the front of the group of men standing at the inner gate in the hope that though their own sight was too dim to see, their children and grandchildren might perhaps see and recognize them. That, at least, would be something, they said.

More Packages from the Outside than the Year before, but not so Large—People in the camp, knowing the scarcity everywhere and the impossible prices had sent out word in one way or another asking their relatives and friends not to send them anything for Christmas. The number of people who came to the gate on Christmas morning was 2142, or many more than on Christmas of 1942! They brought over 5000 packages, baskets, bags, etc., presents of all sorts, including much food. There were not so many roast pigs and turkeys as the year before, but more fried chickens. Home-made preserves were much more in evidence. So Chittick noted. There were more packages than last year, he said, though they were smaller. At prices of everything from 10 to 20 times the normal, no one would ever know the self-denial entailed in this generous giving. And what made this thought the more poignant was that with the distribution of the American Red Cross food-kits, the people in the camp were, for a while at least, far better off for good things of various sorts, canned meats, chocolate, coffee, etc., than the people outside. And these they were forbidden to share.

At the Executive Committee meeting on the 13th, attended by the Commandant, a memorandum had been taken up on the proposed Christmas activities in the camp, and the Commandant, according to the minutes, had made the following decisions:

(1) He believed it will be in order for the children of internees at the Holy Ghost College to visit the camp on Christmas Day. (2) He will see if he can arrange for a Japanese photographer to take photographs of children for the benefit of their parents. (3) He has no objection to movies provided that we can make arrangements to obtain the necessary projectors. (4) He has no objection to the two religious lectures planned, provided that scripts thereof are handed him for censorship beforehand. (5) No midnight masses will be allowed, but there is a possibility that internees will be allowed to attend a special day-time mass at the Seminary. (6) No community dances will be permitted. (7) He is investigating the possibility of the writing of letters to war-prisoners, but doubts that it will be possible to send gifts. (8) With reference to allowing visits of non-interred families with their husbands in camp on Christmas, such as took place last year, he stated that he believed this is not practical, but that he will give his final answer tomorrow."

The final answer under item 8 was "no." The only children from outside the camp allowed to come in were the 60 or 70 interned with their mothers in the Holy Ghost College; the mothers were allowed to accompany them. Some scores of parents had their

(Continued on page 457)

³ The actual figures show that this was an error, but as this manuscript was secretly written and hidden away as written, these could not be checked at the time.

³ Not included in these excerpts.

THUS the picture. What are the conclusions?

(1) That the financial situation, in general, is sound, made so by the large balances of international payments due the Philippines as a result of war operations.

(2) That on the basis of pre-war output in the major industries, the coconut and lumber industries are fully restored, rice, sugar, and abaca are two-thirds rehabilitated, with mining and tobacco bringing up the rear.

(3) That the business of motor vehicle transportation, sea transportation, and air transportation are also almost completely rehabilitated.

(4) That the problem of unemployment will continue to be serious until the important pre-war industries, notably mining, cigar, embroidery, and certain public-utility enterprises are fully rehabilitated, or else new factory industries are introduced to absorb the excess labor.

(5) That business in general during the fiscal year, stimulated by an abundance of cash supply and in spite of a growing buyers' resistance, is fairly satisfactory, comparable to that of the year previous.

(6) That the shortage of our main staple will continue to plague us until we shall have planted enough acreage to rice.

(7) That agrarian disputes will even be bigger in the ensuing years unless the social amelioration program becomes effective; and

(8) The cost of living will continue to be high. The picture indeed is confused. Much must be seen in perspective.

The Three Christmases . . .

(Continued from page 431)

children photographed in the Fathers Garden by a Japanese photographer who came into the camp for the purpose on several successive days. The price was P5 for 4 prints, passport size, unmounted. A moving-picture projector was borrowed and a second-rate feature film, a travelogue, and a comic cartoon were shown one night, Christmas week. Neither notes nor gifts were allowed to be sent to the men in the prison-camps, but relatives in Santo Tomas were allowed to file mimeographed check-forms in lieu of notes on which a bare minimum of personal information could be indicated. No notes were received from the men.

The midnight mass on Christmas Eve, a tradi-

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tionally important service in the Philippines, could not be held, but a special day-time mass was celebrated on Christmas morning in the Dominican Seminary which internees were allowed to attend. All outsiders were first shoed out. Masses were also held in the hospital chapel and other religious services in the Fathers Garden. As for the censorship of the two "religious lectures," the internee department of religion had made a tactical error in including them in the Christmas program which had been drawn up, instead of merely listing them in the program of religious services presented to the Commandant in advance each week as a matter of routine. The censorship of sermons, ordered by the first Commandant, had lapsed. As it was, the speakers concerned submitted merely the outlines of what they wanted to say, and these were approved by Kato.

The Camp Does its Best for the Children — The camp did its best. There was a Christmas pageant on Monday night, staged by the camp's Sunday-school children. On Tuesday night an internee chorus sang Handel's "Messiah" with the accompaniment of a Hammond organ, a piano, and a small

pick-up orchestra. The organ had been brought into the camp some time before by Chittick, whose company was the local agent of the manufacturer. The conductor was Father Visser of Iloilo. The movie show came on Wednesday night. On Christmas Eve there was a program of Christmas carols. On Christmas Day there were various parties for the younger children and those of teen age. The young children had been told that Santa Claus would come through the camp gate at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Little boys and girls expressed the fear that Santa might not be allowed to come into camp. But at 3:30, ten minutes late, he did come in, with a white beard and dressed all in red. One or two curious Japanese soldiers of the gate-guard looked on as a crowd of little children shrieked a welcome. Some of them were so excited that, running, they fell down flat on their faces but forgot to cry.

A small, decorated Baguio pine set on a table on the lawn served as a Christmas tree. There were several long tables piled with toys for the children 10 years and younger. Most of the toys had been made by hand by men and women in the camp, but the

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men in the Los Baños camp had also sent many hand-made toys. Some of them had been donated by people outside. The children filed past the tables, according to their age, and were handed 3 toys each, stuffed animals and dolls, little wooden wagons, etc. It was a sort of wholesale or cafeteria Christmas, but a joyful enough occasion for the little ones, and the older people could not help but be affected by the pleasure of the children. The men with families outside, however, thought of their own children whom they had not been allowed to see or to help with the food from their Red Cross kits. The family-aid committee had handed out kilo-packages of rice which they had been allowed to send out to their families and also some simple toys and bags of candy, but only about half of the men concerned had done so; the rest, in protest, and grieved at being able to do so little, gave up doing anything other than sending out what money they could borrow.

That night there was an organ recital and some special piano, violin, and vocal numbers by internees, and three hours later Christmas, 1943, passed into limbo.

1944

CHRISTMAS preparations had not been nearly as extensive as in 1942 and 1943. People had looked forward to spending another Christmas in the camp with a heavy heart, and there was little that could be done for the children because there was very little of anything in the camp and nothing could be brought in, despite the appeals of the Internee Committee to the Commandant's office. However, on the 22nd, a small amount of supplies, donated by the Neutral Welfare Committee of the International Y.M.C.A., was permitted to enter the camp "through the courtesy of the Commandant's office." Rumor had it that only a fifth of what this committee had wanted to send in had been admitted by the Japanese, but according to Carroll the Committee had no way of confirming this. The supplies admitted consisted of the following:

Mango beans, 8 sacks (401 kilos)	Women and children's clothing, 1 sack
Brown beans, 2 sacks (92 kilos)	Shoes, 1 case
Sugar, 4 sacks (114 kilos)	Sandals, 2 bags: soles and heels, 1 sack
Coffee, 1 sack (34 kilos)	Socks, 2 bundles
Chocolate, 1 box (58 cakes, small)	Men's clothing, 2 boxes
Tea, 10 pounds	Sewing thread
Pepper, 14 jars, small	Knitting yarn
Salt, 5 sacks (227 kilos)	Mosquito-nets, 2 bundles
Calamansi, 9 sacks	Toilet articles, 3 packages
Cigars —	Phonograph records, 25 packages
15,993 "Chicas"	Medicines and drugs, 5 packages
3,600 "Alhambras"	(2 of these supplies were sent aside for Los Baños and were sent there by army truck on the 31st.)
445 "Vice-Presidents"	
Cigarettes, 479 packages	
Pipe-tobacco, 104 packages	
Chewing-tobacco, 66 pieces	

That evening the camp had a serving of hot calamansi drink at supper time because the fruit had arrived in a badly bruised condition and could not be given out, one or two each, to individuals. The next evening there was another serving, somewhat more watery.

Belief said in the evening broadcast (over the camp loud-speaker) on the 22nd, speaking of the Christmas program:

"... You can readily understand that the Christmas program this year is necessarily limited, but for what we lack in material advantages or festive possibilities we can make up in hope, mutual helpfulness, and a true Christmas spirit."⁵

A Christmas morning party to be given at the children's play-house under the auspices of the

⁵ The Japanese in the camp of course listened to these broadcasts.

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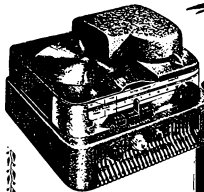
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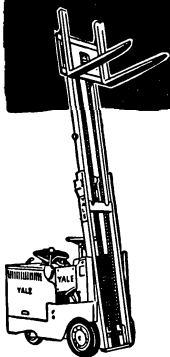
parents association, was scheduled for children up to and including those 15 years of age, they being required to register their meal-tickets on the 23rd in order to obtain admission. The registration had to be cancelled that day because of the air-raid and was held the next day. Special permission to give a program of Christmas music on the evening of the 24th, Sunday, between 6:00 and 6:45, had also been granted by the Commandant's office, but the air-raid on that day forced its postponement, too. There was, however, a general distribution of one 2-pound tin of jam and nine 50-gram pieces of native chocolate, remainders of the camp stock, to every group of 18 people presenting three (6-people) canteen ration-cards, this giving everyone in the camp around 2 spoonful of jam and 1/2 of a small disk of chocolate about the size of a silver peso. A general distribution of 5 cigars (green and of a poor brand) and 4 cigarettes were distributed through the room monitors to all persons 16 years of age or over. These "smokes" came from the neutral welfare committee donation. Some men gulped down the jam and the small piece of chocolate without even waiting for supper time, but most internees made the jam do for several days, eating a little of it on the end of a spoon as a dessert. Supper that night consisted only of the usual serving of one level ladleful of rice and a little larger than usual serving of the soy-bean refuse sauce, but it was pathetic how the camp spirit had risen with the minute distributions of that afternoon.

A solemn high mass, conducted by Father Koelman, was held in the hospital chapel that evening, taking the place of the traditional midnight mass by special dispensation.

Grinnell, Dugleby, Larsen, and Lee were still in the camp jail, despite efforts by Carroll and Lloyd to secure their release if only temporarily. According to the minutes:

"In response to a request from the Committee for the temporary release from the camp jail on account of Christmas of the 4 internees held in the custody of the Japanese authorities, the Commandant's office (Abiko) stated that Lee should be kept where he was. With regard to the others, the ques-

6 C. C. Grinnell, 46. A. F. Dugleby, 52. C. L. Larsen, 34, and E. E. Johnson, 69, were arrested in the camp on December 23, the three former being lodged in the camp jail and the latter being taken out of the camp by the Japanese military police. After liberation a search was made by a special committee and the bodies of all four were found and identified, the men having been secretly executed on or about January 16. The remains were brought back to Santo Tomas and re-interred in a plot just east of the Seminary, the funeral services taking place on February 23. The graves are still there.



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tion of their temporary release was beyond the control of the Commandant's office as they were being held on instructions from the Japanese authorities outside. It was very doubtful whether they could be released, but the Commandant's office would advise the Committee if arrangements could be made."

The Joyful Surprise of the U. S. Army Christmas Leaflets Dropped by Plane during the Night — Three or four bombs were dropped in the direction of Nichols Field a little after 8 o'clock, and the mutter of planes was heard overhead a number of times during the night. In the morning came excitement, joy! Early risers in the shanty areas had found a number of leaflets on the campus which had been dropped during the night from some American plane, — Christmas greetings from the Army, which they hastened to show to their friends. The Japanese soldiers went about looking for groups of people reading them to confiscate them, but many copies had already been made in pencil.

The greetings read:

"The Commander-in-chief, the officers, and the men of the American Forces of Liberation in the Pacific wish their gallant allies, the People of the Philippines, all the blessings of Christmas, and the realization of their fervent hopes for the New Year. Christmas, 1944."

The leaflets were neatly printed on good paper and bore a small religious picture of the scene of the Birth at Bethlehem. Internees said that was wisely done in a largely Catholic country, — much better than if the leaflet had carried some less religious Christmas emblem or decoration. They also called attention to the fact that the people of the Philippines were referred to as "gallant allies," showing that the Americans were giving no importance whatever to the false declaration of war, or of a "state of war," by the puppet "government." The reference to the people's "fervent hopes" indicated that the Americans were well aware of their real state of mind.

The music at reveille was a rousing instrumental transcription of "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

Another solemn high mass was celebrated in the hospital chapel by Father Landwehr, with special music written for the occasion by Mario Bakerini-Booth, an internee from Shanghai. The Protestant service was held at 10 o'clock, the Rev. F. Chambers preaching the Christmas sermon.

The Samurai Steal Some of the Children's Candy — The children's party was held at the play-house between 9:30 and 11:30, with Dave Harvey as the master of ceremonies. As a special treat the children all received two pieces of native *bocayo* candy (coconut and muscovado sugar) each about the size

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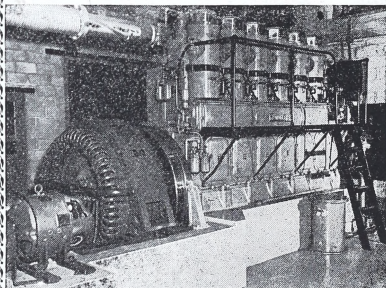
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of a stick of chewing-gum, but a little thicker. Parents had clubbed together and paid P5 for each of their children for this delicacy. It was bought through the Japanese at P170 a kilo. The candy was in the Commandant's office for about two hours after delivery and before being turned over to the parents association, and during this brief time several packages of it disappeared, — the samurai not scrupling at stealing this poor candy from the children. It was all the children received at the party, but a few parents were able to give their children privately some home-made toys and dolls. One little boy received a printing press made from an old hand cigarette machine. At noon, at the annex, the children got a thin chocolate drink in addition to the usual cup of soy-refuse soup.

The Camp's Christmas Dinner — The older people also got something extra in the way of food, though nothing additional was furnished by the Japanese. In the morning there was mush and coconut-milk slightly sweetened with chocolate cake, and a cup of coffee. For lunch there was a really thick soy-bean soup. And that night! A double serving of fried rice and camotes and other vegetables from the camp garden, mixed with some canned meats and five times the regular daily ration of cooking-oil, including some lard that had still been held in the slender camp reserves. What a meal that was! Under the circumstances, it was a culinary triumph, and the camp was grateful to the whole kitchen staff, from chief supervisor Hick, Hunter, the chief cook, and Gildow, his chief adviser and assistant, down to the pot-stirrers and fire-stokers.

As a matter of fact, despite the successive deductions in the camp cereal rations, the meals had actually improved as to *tastiness* with the availability of the soy-bean refuse, and the addition of camotes to the diet added a variable which made a somewhat greater range of meals possible than rice and rice-and-corn alone. If only there had been enough even only to fill the stomach!

In the evening the postponed music and story-reading program was held on the plaza, under the auspices of the department of special activities, with the cooperation of the music department, and under

* In December, 1944, the Santo Tomas diet had been reduced to 960 calories per capita a day supplied by the Japanese, supplemented by 99 calories from supplies the Intercene Finance and Supply Committee was able to bring into the camp, — a total of 1059 calories as against a normal requirement of from 3000 to 4500 calories. In addition to the low calorific value of the diet, it was unbalanced, consisting almost wholly of carbohydrates, with almost no protein or fat. In January the diet was still further reduced to from 500 to 700 calories a day.

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the direction of the Rev. Nolting. Dr. Holter read H. C. Booth's "Song of the Angels,"—a story of sacrifice with the early Neronic persecutions as a background.

The Commandant's office had given "special permission" for curfew to be extended to 8 p.m., with lights allowed until 8:15.

No Visiting. No Packages allowed to Come in—In spite of official discouragement, hundreds of relatives and friends had been at the Santo Tomas gate that morning in the hope of being able to send packages in to their dear ones in the camp, but they were all turned away, still carrying their gifts prepared with love and care and who knows at what sacrifice.

The Knifing in the Gymnasium—Crime and tragedy of another kind had shown itself in the camp that Christmas morning. According to the minutes: "The chief patrolman of the gymnasium (N. M. Cockran) was slashed with a knife by C. W. Staples at 8 a.m. while in the performance of his duties. The slash just pierced the jugular vein and also cut his chest, but owing to prompt attention on the part of the medical staff it is hoped he will recover. His assailant was taken to the hospital with a cut on the back of his hand."

There was a connection between this incident and the food situation. Some of the hungry men in the gymnasium who still obtained their breakfast at the central-kitchen line had gotten into the habit of rushing off before the dismissal from roll-call was given, and that morning Staples had reached the door when Cockran laid his hand on his shoulder and asked him politely to return to his place. Staples refused and as Cockran tried to take him back Staples resisted and shouted, "Keep your hands off me! My heart! My heart!" A struggle ensued during which Staples fell between two beds. He lay there for a moment, fumbling at his pocket, and Cockran walked back to the door, Staples then getting up with a drawn knife which he held behind his back. Others warned Cockran, "He's got a knife!" and Cockran stepped outside and picked up a pole as Staples reached the doorway. Cockran came back to the stoop and Staples knifed him in the neck, after which Cockran, before collapsing, knocked him down with the pole. Staples sustained a cut on his hand and also a bleeding head which he might have obtained either in falling against the bed or against the edge of the stoop. Cockran was taken to the hospital seriously wounded, and Staples also went to the hospital to have his head and hand bound up. This was the first serious incident of the kind in the

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camp in three years and evidenced the nervous strain which existed.

The Disappearance of the Persian Cat—An incident which pointed to a lesser crime was the disappearance on Christmas Day of the most beautiful cat, a Persian, most persons in Santo Tomas had ever seen. Very large, with sleek mauve-gray fur and a thick bushy tail, he attracted attention at all times. He had been raised from kittenhood by Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Roberts and had shared the major part of the family's internment. It had been no easy thing to feed him properly, and this had required sacrifice. The poor splendid beast had gone into the pot, like many a more common member of his genus, of some one without either conscience or an appreciation of the rarest of feline beauty.

Distant bombing had been heard in the morning and it was said that the Tribune of the day before had stated that the Japanese high command had announced that Corregidor was "no longer considered of military value." Earlier rumors were to the effect that both Corregidor and Mariveles had been heavily bombed as well as Lucena and Batangas.

"And so," as the announcer had said at the end of the broadcast of the Christmas program the night before—

"Insofar as the camp is concerned, that finishes Christmas Day of 1944. Not what we could have wished for, not enough food, not the material things which we would have liked to give our friends and loved ones, not much health,—but have hopes ever been higher? Have wishes ever been stronger? And so, with high hopes and strong wishes, may we, on behalf of the camp internee administration, wish you one and all a courageous Christmas and a gloriously happy New Year?"

*As well as all the camp dogs.

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Weekly Changes in Retail Price Level

Bureau of Commerce, Market Division
November 22-27, 1948

SPEARHEADED by rice, the key commodity in the price-index structure, prices of several essential commodities continued to relax during the week ending November 27, 1948, thus pulling down further the Bureau of Commerce Price Index to the 245.17-mark, off 1.83 from the previous level.

Marking a slight relief from the current high prices of rice in the black-market was the recent decline in the prices of native rice varieties. An even decrease of 10 centavos was recorded by elon-elon, first class, at P2.15 per ganta, and P2.05 for second class; P1.95 for macan, first class, and P1.85 for second class. The influx of newly harvested rice and the regular and more liberal distribution of NARIC rice through neighborhood distributors and market vendors owing to recent arrivals of imported rice, all aided materially in bringing down further the prices of the cereal.

The decline in rice prices was followed by a corresponding decrease in the prices of palay (unhusked rice) and corn. Palay eased off by 10 centavos at 90 centavos per ganta while corn went down by 5 centavos at 85 centavos.

Conspicuously resisting the overall tendency during the week and continuing its upward movement since the preceding week, was sugar. Refined advanced by 3 centavos at the average price of 53 centavos per kilo; centrifugal edge up by 1 centavo at 48 centavos for the washed variety and by 3 centavos at 45 centavos for the brown.

With only bañugs and shrimps recording gains, all other fresh fish items such as apahap, hito, lapu-lapu, dalag, tala-akitok, bisugo, and tanigue, declined. Dried fish items were generally steady except tunsoy tuyo which went up to P2.63