

SPINACH, WATER DIET

Freed Priest Wears Coat Dropped by B-29

Rev. Bertrand Derouin of Quebec City, liberated from a Japanese prison camp after being interned for almost four years, stopped over at the C.N.R. station for a few minutes Sunday night on his way to Quebec and declared that the food situation in camp was grim.

"It was a zero," he said.

Accompanying him were two other Catholic priests who were interned at the same camp. They were Rev. Raymond Martineau and Rev. Paul Gagnon.

Father Derouin, dark and deeply tanned, wore over his clerical clothing a jacket which had been dropped in a parcel of clothing from a B-29 Aug. 25 last.

German missionaries were interned in the same camp and, ironically enough, it was a German missionary who brought to the three fathers the news of their liberation. The fathers were allowed to hold services.

All in all, the camp where he

was interned was not "too bad," Father Derouin said. He explained that he had been 12 years in Japan prior to being taken prisoner and had known the guards in peacetime. He had acted as their interpreter at various times.

For months the three priests lived on spinach and water and small portions of rice which the Japanese girls wrapped in paper and surreptitiously deposited in the waste receptacles. None of them was ever caught. Different camps, said Father Derouin, had different regulations. Some camps were much more rigidly supervised than others.

"There was no excuse for the poor food conditions," said Father Derouin. "Food was being sent to us but it was our guards who were getting fat on it."

The prisoners were allowed radios and newspapers—Jap, of course. Derouin used to translate the news and write it on a slate for everyone to read. Jap victories were played up and defeats couched in clever phraseology which told the Japs little but the prisoners plenty.

The sadistic attitude of the Japanese was not concentrated completely on prisoners, Father Derouin said. "They are cruel and heartless with their own people. As for me, I am able to argue with my guards. My experience in peacetime proved advantageous in this respect."

The bespectacled priest believes that the occupation of Japan will not be difficult insofar as ruling the common people is concerned. Keeping them well fed, he feels, is of top importance.

"The Thought Police which MacArthur is going to eliminate," said Father Derouin, "are similar to the German Gestapo. They call them Thought Police because one of their chief duties is to control the thoughts of the people. They are a bad lot."

There is no doubt about the potency of the atomic bomb when you know about the havoc it wrought, said the Dominican father. "Worms lodged four feet deep in the earth were burned to a crisp," he explained. Father Derouin is a cousin of Senator Louis Beaubien, former member for Provencher. As he made ready to catch his train for Quebec City, the priest recalled with a wistful smile that Senator Beaubien had bade him farewell on the same station platform when he left for the Orient 16 years ago.



Father Bertrand Derouin wears a jacket dropped from a B-29 in a bundle of food and clothing Aug. 25 last. He is a cousin of Senator Louis Beaubien, former member for Provencher.