

NUTRITION

Change in Food Habits May Avert Famine in Europe

Good Corn Crop Offsets Shortages in Wheat and Rye; Oils and Fats Figured at 25% Less Than Normal

HUNGER for some of Europe's millions will be lessened in days ahead, provided they can do a difficult thing—change their food habits. So it appears from latest reports from the European war food front, studied by agricultural economists.

The Continent's short crops of rye and wheat, for example, may be balanced against a good corn crop in southern Europe and against a good potato crop, for somewhat reassuring totals on "food." But can peasants in countries unaccustomed to corn make good use of it? There's a catch in the arithmetic. Yet, from German sources has come the grim warning that conquered areas must exert themselves to the utmost to feed themselves.

"By tightening their belts and making some changes in their food consumption habits, they should be able in most sections to get through the winter," is the way the situation looks to the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

It foresees likelihood, however, of a serious situation in some regions, and among some consumer groups, because of difficulties in adjusting the food available to the requirements of the people.

Americans will recall that teaching hungry French and Belgians to eat American cornmeal, instead of wheat flour, during World War days proved so

Herculean a task that the United States settled down to using the corn and sending more wheat to Europe.

Nutritionists explain that this was not sheer contrariness on the part of hungry peasants. The French are more used to buying bread than baking it. Their farmhouse ovens are far different from quick American stoves. Cornmeal was thus a double problem—unfamiliar to taste and a major problem to handle.

As for rice, some Belgians found it too strange for eating. Paradoxically, in rice-eating areas of India efforts to break rice famines with other foods have met with difficulty. It had to be rice.

In our own country, the southern share-cropper clings to a pellagra-causing diet of monotonous cornbread, fat-back, and molasses. It is a major victory when nutritionists can win over these, or other Americans, to unfamiliar foods needed to round out a diet.

Europe's worst food debits are in the rye and wheat crops, as the situation ap-

pears now. The fruit crop is also figured as smaller than last year's large crop. Supplies of fats and oils are probably 25% less than normal. The Continent depends on outside sources for about half of the fats and oils it uses, and what its hoarded reserves now amount to is not known.

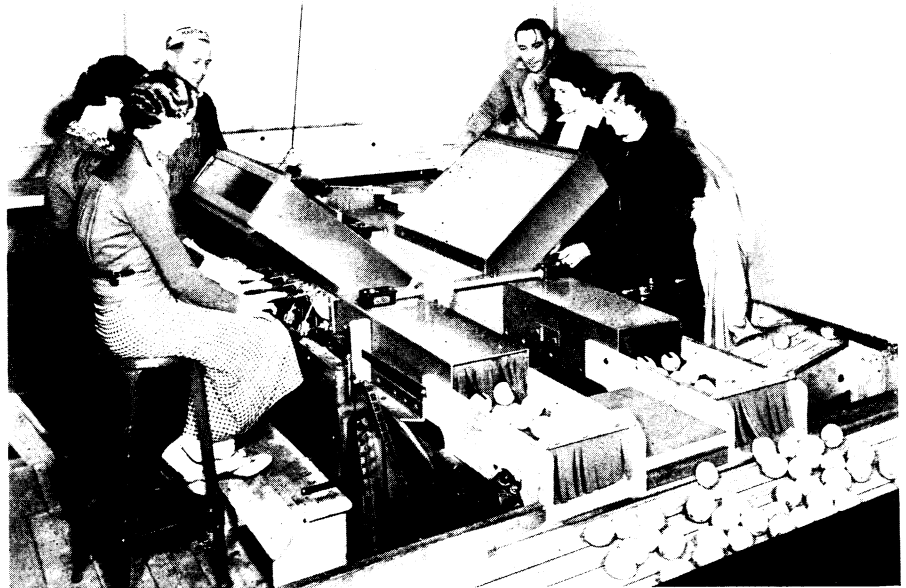
On the credit side of the food ledger, however, are the large corn and potato crops; a large vegetable crop; adequate supplies of sugar, doled out by rationing; considerable supplies of meat for the present, due to slaughter of more animals than usual.

Balancing conditions on the egg situation, it is figured that, while many of northwest Europe's hens will be killed and commercial egg production reduced, the loss of the British market for eggs "may leave almost normal supplies of eggs available for Continental consumption."

Disposal of these uneven supplies is another problem, hinging on transportation uncertainties and other fortunes of war. Eating whatever comes their way is the prospect for Europeans caught in these war tangles, and faced with what the most conservative observers term an "uncomfortable" winter.

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The most populated regions of South America are geographically closer to Mediterranean lands, or even to England, than they are to the United States.



X-RAYS FIND HIDDEN FAULTS

Beneath the fair smooth skin of an orange may be a ruined, inedible fruit. Watchers at the fluoroscopes over this conveyor belt in a California packing plant can see right through the oranges, discarding the good-looking bad ones. X-rays serve in like capacities in a thousand other industries, from breakfast food to armor plate.

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