

## CONSERVATION

# Aid for Flooded Holland

► AMERICAN PUMPS and diesel engines to operate them, now being secured in the United States by the Netherlands government, will clear the acres flooded by the Germans, some with sea water. But from five to ten years of scientific treatment of the soil will be necessary before the land flooded by sea water becomes productive again. A much longer time will elapse before fruit and other trees can be planted and reach maturity. The salt water kills practically all vegetation.

Before pumping operations begin, miles of new dikes will have to be built and many other miles repaired. Machinery for this, as well as great quantities of stone, cement and other construction materials, will have to be imported. In addition, great quantities of building materials will be required to restore the cities and homes destroyed by flooding. The Netherlands has suffered a major catastrophe, for without land to till and pasture for their cattle millions of Dutch people must find other means of earning a livelihood.

Between 60% and 65% of the entire population of the Netherlands has been affected by the floods let loose upon the country by the enemy, one Netherlands official stated.

Netherlands Premier Gerbrandy, reporting on flood conditions early in October, declared: "Even more disastrous, from the long-time point of view, is the systematic campaign of inundations and demolitions planned long ago by the German authorities, already partly executed in preceding months and now in the process of being carried to their ultimate conclusion."

"The following figures are based on known German defense plans which

already have been largely carried out and whose execution is still being completed," he said. "Arable land flooded—675,000 acres, or 22 per cent of the total arable land in the Netherlands; pasture flooded—327,500 acres, or 11 per cent of the total pasture in the Netherlands; total flooded—1,000,000 acres, or 17 per cent of the total arable land and pasture. Very considerable parts of these areas have been flooded with salt water as a result of which the land becomes unusable for several years."

Walcheren, the great Dutch island that guards the shipping route to Antwerp, is one of the areas most severely ruined by flooding. There are three great gaps in the dike that surrounds the nearly circular island, and it looks today like a 10-mile dish with a broken rim, filled with dirty seawater.

A new dike about a mile and a half long must be built to plug the gaps. It will take a year to get the island dry, then years to cleanse the soil of the salt. After the flooding of the nearby Zuid-Beveland island in 1906 it took agricultural experts five years to make it fit for cultivation.

All pumping installations on Walcheren, and in other flooded areas, are not completely destroyed but many are without power, and diesel engines have been decided upon as the best power for immediate installation. Walcheren's power station escaped serious damage, but the Germans stole or destroyed the great dredges needed to scrape sand from sea bottom to build the dikes and the machinery to press the sand into place. Orders totaling \$12,000,000 have already been placed in the United States for new pumps, engines and machinery.

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## Do You Know?

Most *pythons* feed on small mammals and birds.

Plants grown in the same soil may vary in *iodine* content.

*Acetone* can be made by the fermentation of corn.

Calves, sheep, pigs, horses and poultry are liable to *goiter*.

Blending the juices from different varieties of apples sometimes make a better flavored *cider*.

Unshrinkable *wool fibers* are made by a method of forming synthetic resin within the structure of the fiber.

Certain *lungfish* of Central Africa and South Africa during dry seasons burrow in the mud about 18 inches and secrete a protective cocoon of slime.

The largest *penicillin* factory in the world, under construction in England, will begin production late in 1944, it is expected.

*Carrots* have a skin-sensitizing principle which is irritating to some persons who come in contact with this vegetable in raw, dried, or heated state.

Wild *fawns* do not follow their mothers for some time after birth; finding a fawn alone does not always indicate that it has been deserted.

Outdoor-grown Mexican *orchids* are now being shipped to the United States by airplanes, arriving in excellent condition.

The average length of American and Orinoco adult *crocodiles*, the two largest species, is from 10 to 12 feet, but specimens of both have been found measuring 23 feet.

The United States, under war conditions, now leads the world in the quantity of *wool textiles* produced; Great Britain is traditionally the world's largest peacetime producer.

A *pet fox* kept chained to a dog kennel and fed bread and milk soon neglected this food but remained in good condition; later it was found that he used the bread and milk as bait to attract barnyard chickens, whose feathers he hid in the kennel.

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