



## CANDID SHOTS

Here is baby Alf, six months old, caught in playful and pensive mood by the camera of Dr. Henry W. Nissen. See also front cover.

NUTRITION

# Is the World Facing Famine? Dark Question Haunts Experts

## While United States Has Plenty, Hunger stalks in Large Parts of Europe and China; Wheat Crops Bad

**I**S THE world being drawn toward famine?

This dark question haunts the food experts, who soberly admit they cannot see far ahead in this continually surprising war. But reports from the world's food front, that mean bread, or none, for large masses of the world's two billion people, are not bright.

There is hunger now in parts of Europe, hunger in northern China. The United States, more fortunate, sees no menacing shadow of food shortages on its own horizon.

At start of Europe's war, the world's granaries overflowed with largest wheat supplies known in history. The 1939 crop, plus record-breaking reserves, totaled the tremendous amount of 5,459,000,000 bushels, not counting the wheat in Soviet Russia and China, for which available figures are never complete.

Now, the wheat situation is less favorable. Wheat, which means bread to one-third of the world, has been attacked by severe winter in northern Europe,

and by a late spring, shortage of field labor, devastation in embattled countries. The crop is forecast as less than needed for consumption.

Meanwhile, ironically, the reserve that was record-breaking in 1939 is apt to be about 250,000,000 bushels larger than in July, 1939, when it stood at 1,189,000,000 bushels. A large part of this reserve is in the hands of the Big Four wheat exporting countries—Australia, Canada, the United States, Argentina. Shipping and financing limit the amount that can be exported now. By another July, in 1941, the carry-over will be on the down grade, it is believed. Oddly enough, the Wheat Advisory Committee, back in 1938, forecast the carry-over of the world's wheat to be expected in the summer of 1940 at 1,369,000,000 bushels, which is close to the reality, though that forecast was based on an assumption of "normal conditions."

The saying of World War days, "wheat will win the war" may be heard again if strife spreads and lengthens. Germany's recent invasions have damaged crop prospects of lands that never produced enough grain for themselves at best. The United States in an ordinary year would expect to send 80,000,000 bushels of wheat to Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway. Feeding 20,000,000 Belgians, Dutch, and Danes next winter is a problem that Germany faces. And Germany's conquests have not yet brought her major grain resources to meet her own needs.

Reports of the world's wheat future include these:

Japan's wheat crop is now expected to be 24% less than the official estimate, due to adverse weather and not enough fertilizer supplies.

Finland lost quantities of grain in the ceded area, and found its imports of grain from Scandinavia cut off, when war broke out there. Finland expects a shortage of grain next winter.

France has the burden of 5,000,000 refugees, with the Red Cross as the only stop-gap aid in meeting the problem.

North China has been faced with hunger, and latest reports of the wheat crop there are conflicting, some encouraging, others not.

A bread-basket land like Hungary is rationing its flour to handle exports.

The United States' wheat crop is forecast a little smaller than last year, totaling 489,000,000 bushels of winter wheat, 215,000,000 bushels of spring wheat, and a carry-over in July, 1940, of about 288,000,000 bushels.

Spain, which spent a grim winter, with some towns going two days at a time without bread, has another scant cupboard to look forward to. The wheat yield is forecast at 20% below normal, due to scarcity of fertilizers, poor agricultural machinery and low acreage. Spain offers a preview of what other lands enduring war can expect.

*Science News Letter, June 15, 1940*

## ● RADIO ●

Prof. John M. Fogg, Jr., University of Pennsylvania botanist, will tell how you can become an amateur scientist and study and collect wild flowers in your vicinity as guest scientist on "Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Thursday, June 20, 4:00 p.m., EDST, 3:00 EST, 2:00 CST, 1:00 MST, 12:00 PST.

Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Thursday.

## ● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories resulted in the location by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey of the following preliminary epicenter:

June 5, at 6:01 a.m., EST

Same location as quake of May 28. Latitude 68 degrees north. Longitude 138 degrees west. Strong shock.

For stations cooperating with Science Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Jesuit Seismological Association in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs, see *SNL*, Feb. 24,