

PUBLIC HEALTH

Morale of Germans Will Break When Homes Are Bombed

Hungry and Tired All the Time, and Without Enough Physicians, They Would Like To Quit Right Now

THE GERMANS, hungry all the time and tired all the time by the combination of too little food and long hours of work, will break when there has been enough bombing of their homes.

This is the opinion of Dr. Howard D. Fishburn, U. S. Public Health Service, who just returned on the Drottningholm from Germany where he had been on official duty since September, 1938.

"I have heard Germans say that the thing that will get them is when there's been enough bombing of their homes," he declared in an interview immediately after reporting to Public Health Service headquarters at Bethesda, Md.

He explained that this is because home life means so much more to the Germans than to Americans. He doubts, however, whether there will be much difference between German and English morale under bombing so long as the bombing of Germany is confined to industrial centers.

Food is the biggest problem in Germany today, Dr. Fishburn declared. The Germans are not starving to death, he said, but they have lost the sense of well-being that comes with a full stomach. The population in general has been gradually losing weight under the food restrictions. The effect is otherwise not very noticeable in the appearance of those who were healthy at the beginning of the war, but the old people and those with chronic diseases have not stood the short rations very well.

He had personal experience of the food problem in Germany after being interned at Bad Nauheim with the American diplomatic group and newspaper correspondents. The food there, probably better than the average German gets, was "bad," Dr. Fishburn declared. He said that the most they got totaled about 1,800 calories a day per person and there were not many days in the week when the group got that much to eat. Nutrition standards call for 2,200 to 2,800 calories per day for a man doing sedentary work.

The effect of the inadequate diet at Bad Nauheim was quickly felt in a loss of energy. Some of the group who

played softball once a week for amusement found themselves worn out after seven innings.

Food in Germany is rationed to the population according to the work each person does, those doing heavy work getting more. Hours of labor, however, are very long. Dr. Fishburn could not give exact figures, but told of one acquaintance met regularly on the bus in Berlin who would often say "I have to work 18 hours today."

A great shortage of doctors and of medicines exists in Germany. It is very difficult to get any vitamin preparations or any kind of medicines. All young doctors are with the Army. The Germans claim to have many synthetic substitutes for natural medicinal preparations, such as a synthetic iodine, but Dr. Fishburn seemed skeptical about these "claims."

No reports of the number of cases of disease or of the number of deaths in Germany were released after war started in 1939, so Dr. Fishburn had no exact information from such sources of the state of health in the country. Some increase in influenza and other diseases of nose, throat and lungs did occur, but there were no major epidemics.

There is typhus fever in several dif-

ferent localities in Germany, but Dr. Fishburn has no idea how much.

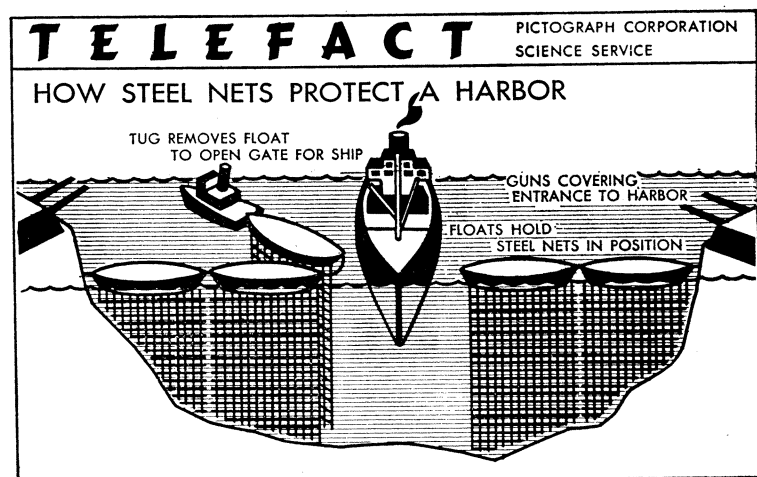
He and two other U. S. Public Health Service officers, Dr. Charles G. Spicknall and Dr. William S. Baum, were prevented from visiting certain prisoner-of-war camps because of typhus in those areas and consequent quarantine regulations. The disease flared up when the influx of Russian prisoners started and, according to hearsay, German soldiers on leave brought it back. The Germans are using a vaccine against typhus fever but Dr. Fishburn was unable to find out anything about what kind of vaccine it is or how effective it may be.

The Public Health Service officers had been assigned to inspection of the prisoner-of-war camps for the British and Belgians in 1941 when emigration from Germany to the United States stopped and relieved them of their work of examining aliens and enforcing U. S. quarantine regulations.

Conditions in these camps were satisfactory so far as housing and clothing were concerned, but the food furnished by the Germans was inadequate. This food was supplemented to some extent by packages from the British Red Cross and other organizations outside Germany.

The group did not see any concentration camps but Dr. Fishburn said he saw "lots of people with frozen feet and fractured skulls who had been in concentration camps," adding sarcastically that he did not know, of course, whether they received these injuries in the camps or after leaving them.

In spite of a shortage of soap and of material for clothing, the Germans still appear pretty clean and well dressed.



"The soap," Dr. Fishburn said, "is awful. They have a product they call soap which looks like a piece of clay and makes just about as much lather as clay would."

"The German people are very tired of the war," he stated. "They would like to quit right now but they feel they have to win or nothing will be left of Germany."

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NUTRITION

Meat For Fighting Men To Be Abundant Here

Beef Cattle Production Expected To Reach Highest Point in History Within the Next Two Years

MEAT for fighting men, and for the working civilian armies that back them up, will be produced in abundance in America, Secretary of Agriculture Wickard promises in his annual report. Well recovered from the twin curses of depression and drought of the mid-thirties, which necessitated liquidation of many herds and flocks, the livestock industry swings into the fighting line of total national effort with the trampling of many millions of hooves.

Beef cattle have shown a strong upswing from their depletion of the drought years. Total numbers are very nearly up to those of the peak year, 1934. Increases have been largest in the East and the Far West; the Plains region, hardest hit during the drought period, has not yet built up its herds to their former level. Despite an increase in slaughter of 6% or 7% over 1941, beef herds are still growing bigger, and it is anticipated that during the next two years they will reach the highest point in the history of the country.

Hogs are not expected to increase as rapidly as beef cattle. However, their number has been very high in recent years, with a resulting depression trend in price that has given the AAA considerable difficulty. Rising prices brought about by heavy purchases of lard and pork for export, as well as by increase in industrial consumer purchasing power, will have a stimulating tendency.

Sheep, like cattle, are at a high point. The 1941 lamb crop, 5% larger than that of 1940, was the largest on record. The year's kill was very large, with prices good. War-stimulated demand for wool, as well as the general uptrend in meat prices, should result in rapidly increasing flocks.

Particular emphasis has been placed on poultry and eggs, milk and other

dairy products, in the war effort, both for the use of our own armed forces and working population and for lend-lease export to our Allies. Similar emphasis has also been laid on fruit and vegetable production.

Efforts will still be made to divert acreage from the big "surplus" crops—wheat, cotton, tobacco—into the growing of other things for which demand is not yet fully balanced by supply.

"Ideally performed, the agricultural task would give us what we need for our own consumption and for our allies and nothing else," Secretary Wickard points out. "It would suspend the production of surpluses. All misdirected effort in wartime is waste. We shall not attain the ideal, but we shall move toward it . . . History will judge us by what we do with what we have."

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Rats Are Costly Pests And a Danger to Health

ONE of the dangers on the home front that we must continue to fight is the menace of the rat. These animals can spread bubonic plague, typhus fever, infectious jaundice, rat-bite fever and food poisoning. The annual cost to the nation is \$200,000,000, and to each family from \$8 to \$20, the Boston City Health Department states.

Anti-rat war plans follow three lines: 1. Starve them out; 2. Kill them; 3. Build them out.

To starve them out, store garbage in covered metal containers. Store food in covered containers of glass or metal. Keep floors, stairways, alleys, streets and backyards free from bits of food and garbage. Don't store garbage in uncovered paper or cardboard bags or boxes.

Don't leave food for birds and pets where rats can find it. Don't store fruits and vegetables in cellars.

To kill rats, try to find the holes they use to enter the house and set traps there and other places where rats usually pass. Set several traps at a time, using different kinds of bait, such as meat, fish, vegetable, cereal or chocolate. Tie the bait securely on the trigger and don't let it become spoiled or rancid. Don't use rat poisons, since they can kill people, too, if eaten. Leave the use of poison gas to a professional exterminator who can handle it safely.

To build them out, keep the entire house free from rubbish, such as paper, sawdust, excelsior or old cloth that rats could use for nests. Stack wood, paper or boxes neatly on platforms raised at least 18 inches off the ground. Fill in all holes around wires or pipes with a mixture of plaster or concrete mixed with broken glass. Cover all holes with a piece of metal sheeting; a tin can beaten flat will often do. Check all doors and windows to be sure they fit tightly and replace or board over tightly all broken windows or doors. Clean drains of accumulated material. Fill up or block up all dead spaces in floors and walls whenever possible. Use cement, concrete, metal or brick instead of wood. Remember to ratproof garages, sheds and the like as well as the house.

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ENGINEERING

Great Ship's Propellers Are Delivered on the Dot

See Front Cover

THE huge manganese bronze propeller shown on the front cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER will soon be on its way to one of Uncle Sam's many busy shipyards where ships are being put together from parts fabricated often at distant inland points. The propeller is about to leave the shops of the Cramp Brass and Iron Foundries Division of the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia, where it was made.

Production at the Foundries has been stepped up for many months to meet the tremendously increased demand for propellers. Not a single ship has been held on the ways, said N. H. Schwenk, vice-president, awaiting delivery of propellers from the Cramp Foundries.

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Ants are the one important natural enemy of termites.