

NUTRITION

PW's Recover Quickly

Rapid recuperation from starvation of Americans liberated from Jap prison camps gives good prognosis for people in disturbed areas abroad.

► THE MEN, women and children in European and other disturbed areas who have suffered starvation or near starvation during the war will have a better chance for good recovery than has generally been expected, nutrition experts serving as consultants to the Army Medical Corps believe.

The speed with which Americans liberated from Japanese prison camps have recovered from starvation is the basis for this belief.

Civilians captured in the Philippines were examined during the 72 hours between their return to West Coast ports and their departure for their homes throughout the country. Results of the examinations were reported to Maj. Gen. Norman T. Kirk, Surgeon General of the Army, by the consultants, Dr. Allan M. Butler, of Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Julian M. Ruffin, of Duke University School of Medicine, and Miss Marion M. Sniffen and Miss Mary E. Nickson, of the American Red Cross in San Francisco.

Re-conquest of the Philippines came just in time for the American civilian prisoners of war, the report indicates. Those at Santo Tomas, Los Banos and Bilibid internment camps were then "slipping over into the borderline state of extreme starvation."

Late in 1944, the American administrative committee of the camp at Santo Tomas reported that "more than 50% of the camp had clinical signs of starvation."

On their return to America, shortly after their liberation, 78% of the internees reported that they felt "fine" except for getting tired easily.

The most common complaint still existing in the Americans, the nutrition consultants report, is neuritis of the hands and feet.

The biggest complaint they had immediately on reaching America was digestive upset suffered on their way back as they began to eat "something approaching a normal American diet."

These digestive upsets that came with the shift from the inadequate diet to highly concentrated food like the Army

K ration give a tip to persons responsible in future for feeding liberated prisoners or starving populations. A special emergency diet should be used, the nutrition consultants advise. Skim milk and other suitable proteins, plus vitamins, should be given first, instead of carbohydrate foods like white flour and sugar.

Of the eight children born in captivity, only three showed the effects of malnutrition. Rickets was not as prevalent as it might have been from diet standards alone because the mild climate and sunlight in the Philippines made it possible for these babies to synthesize their own vitamin D.

The rapidity of recovery of the adults and the relatively good condition of the children show how quickly the human body will return to normal, the nutrition consultants stated.

"This recovery justifies a prognosis for individuals throughout disturbed areas of the world which is better than generally appreciated," they report.

"Continually, while the information submitted here was being obtained," the report concludes, "evidence of a chivalry

of men to women and of men and women to the sick and young was revealed which should be recorded in honor of these individuals and as a tribute to the society whose code they adhered to under such trying circumstances."

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ENGINEERING

Telephone Installations Will Soon Begin

► TELEPHONE installations in private homes and in offices will follow closely the manufacture of new telephone instruments, switchboards for central offices and telephone exchange cable, it is announced by Western Electric Company, Inc., which manufactures most of the materials and equipment used by the Bell Telephone companies. Some of the manufacturing plants are already working on a seven-day week; others will, as soon as conversion from war manufacturing is completed.

The making of telephone instruments for civilian installations was actually re-established in the late summer of 1944, after war needs were met. Over 400,000 instruments have been made since last fall and production is now going on at the rate of 25,000 a week. But even with this production, many subscriber applications cannot be filled immediately because of a shortage of switchboards and cable.

Science News Letter, September 22, 1945



BIG GUN! The undamaged tube of the gun found by Col. F. B. Porter in Bavaria was 105 feet long. (See page 180)