

All Belgium Mined, Ready For Blow-up

Germans Place Explosives Under Cathedrals, Historic Buildings, and Streets—Plan Against Retreat Day—Worker Tells What Enemy will Do.

NEW YORK, Aug. 30.—A story of conditions in Antwerp as they are today, as well as in other parts of Belgium, was told yesterday by Herman Huysmans, an expert worker in an ammunition factory, who managed to get out of the country, and who arrived here yesterday to begin life anew in this country. His wife and two little children were killed during the bombardment of Antwerp in 1914, and since that time he has lived alone and much of the time in want in the Belgian metropolis. Huysmans is educated and the story he told yesterday was not a recital of atrocities and inhuman acts committed by the Germans, but one rather of German efficiency as directed at the people of a conquered country.

The food situation in all parts of Belgium, Huysmans said, could not well be exaggerated. Milk is no longer to be had and babies are now fed on milk tablets, which are to be had only in minimum quantities. Bacon sells at \$2.50 a pound, and coffee, except in the cases of those who still have some money left, is no longer to be had. The country has been mined by the Germans, supposedly in anticipation of a possible future retreat through the country. Able-bodied Belgians have the option of working for the military authorities or of seeing some of their women folk deported into Germany, while the crops when harvested are divided into a ratio of about four and one-half parts to the Germans and one-half part to the Belgians.

Bread 40 cents a loaf.

"When I left Antwerp," said Huysmans, "bread was selling at 40 cents for a small loaf, meat brought \$2 a pound. The potato crop this year was fine for the Germans, but not for the Belgians, for if a farmer had a crop that netted 500 kilos he had to turn over 450 kilos to the German authorities, most of it to be exported into Germany for the population there.

"The Germans have been busy for months mining the country. The mines have been placed not only at strategic points, but in many of the

Defences All Reconstructed.

"In Antwerp the Germans have reconstructed all the defences and the city was never so strongly fortified as at this moment. The Germans compel the Belgians to do military construction, and when one refuses they go to his house and take his wife or daughter or perhaps both and deport them to Germany. They do not even tell them to what part of Germany they are going. On one occasion they lined up a lot of Belgian workmen and asked those who were willing to work for the Germans to step forward. The whole line stepped back two steps.

"I had to utter just two words to tell the story of Belgium I would simply say 'poor Belgium.' That tells the story."

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And they haven't been satisfied with the answers.

"We are helpless," reply the retailers. "The big concerns are boosting the wholesale prices. We must increase our prices or go out of business."

"The war is the reason," say the food barons. "Tremendous demand on America. Supply smaller than before the war. Prices just naturally go up. Unfortunate, but true." The food baron smiles a bit as he gives his answer.

Figures compiled by the California State Market Commission show that on twenty-three commodities the average increase in wholesale prices from 1913 to 1916 is 24 1-5 per cent.

Sugar has increased 71 per cent; mutton, 34 per cent; onions, 177 per cent; potatoes, 105 per cent; prunes, 100 per cent; beans, 64 per cent, and raisins, 41 per cent. In six months canned fruits and vegetables controlled by Pacific coast concerns have gone up from 20 to 50 per cent. Lard has advanced more than 30 per cent in three months, with no change in normal conditions of supply other than "the war."

Producers and Consumers

Here's another answer: Prof. W. E. Hotchkiss, of Northwestern University, at Chicago, claims that the trend of population towards the cities is a great factor in the increase of food prices. "Consumers of foodstuffs are increasing and producers decreasing. More food is produced to-day, but the percentage of population engaged in food production is decreasing. The trend is toward the cities, where people become consumers of food, when heretofore they had been producers. All efforts in the way of foods have been toward the decreasing of the cost of production and perfecting the machinery of commercial distribution. Great advancement has been made in preparing and handling foods, but this is still far from efficient, and there has been no big increase nor enough attention given to the producing of foodstuffs."

Prof. Hotchkiss' contention sounds as though he believes that when people move from the country to the cities they become consumers of food, something they were not while upon the land. The trend toward the cities does not add to the number of consumers. Just how this abandonment of the farms has affected the production of foods is best seen by taking a look at the constantly increasing amount of food produced. Every year's crop is larger than the previous one, and "bumper crop" stories and cartoons fill the papers, during the harvest season. A comparison of increase of population with increase of food production will show that the per capita supply is not growing smaller.

Consumer Perplexed.

All these boosts in price on the actual necessities of life have caused the consumer to scratch his head and try to figure out the why. At the same time he has attempted some mental arithmetic to find out why his salary has not increased in proportion to the price elevation.

The Real Shortage.

It isn't shortage of production that is responsible for the high cost of living nor is it due to increase of population. The shortage is in brains.

The people of the United States have permitted their food supply to remain in the hands of private profit seekers, and every one of them has raked in something for himself first.

The railroads get a rakeoff, the commission agents took some, the jobber, the banker, the elevator company, the local transportation company, the retailer, every one of them grabbed off a bit of profit for himself first.

There has been no national effort to bring the food direct from the producer to the consumer. Private firms have stood between, and they have not only demanded a pro ratio share, but speculated and cornered parts of the supply.

There's only one solution—and that will come when the Nation will produce for service, and not for profits.

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness and others join the police force.



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A Frenchman's Daring Feat

Spoke Good German and Enters German Trenches Where he is Made Welcome—Gathers Much Valuable Information While Paying his Friendly Call

PARIS, Aug. 28.—On Monday one of the most remarkable stories of the war was told by Corporal Marcel B. Classe, aged thirteen, belonging to a French regiment d'élite. The Corporal took part in the French drive at Maurepas on Thursday, and was under the German bombardment. A big shell exploded near him, and in describing his experiences he said:

"For an instant I felt myself in the midst of an earthquake then I lost consciousness. The next thing I remember I was finding myself in a shell hole five yards further up the slope, naked, save for a shirt, but beyond numerous bruises and the loss of two front teeth, marvelously uninjured. There was no sign of my men, but before me lay the corpse of a Boche soldier in the uniform of the Fourteenth Bavarians. It seemed later the sun was hidden, and I shivered in the wind. The German canonade now was so heavy it seemed impossible to rejoin my comrades, so I stripped the Boche of his coat and trousers and put them on. After waiting some time the wild idea seized me of crawling towards the enemy's line—a great part of their shells were falling behind me—to see if I could learn anything useful, but the escape from the explosion that caused a state of fatalism in which nothing seemed to matter. Besides I speak German fluently, and I hoped to get most valuable information. After creeping through the bushwood for twenty or thirty yards I reached the German

boyan, along which I advanced boldly. Suddenly 'wer da' rang out, and I saw a group of German soldiers cooking food at the entrance of a dugout. They greeted me with amazement, and I learned the Bavarian battalion to which they imagined I belonged had been annihilated by the French bombardment. They were a newly-arrived Silesian regiment from Verdun, just brought up to full strength by drafts from home. Already in two days they had four hundred casualties while waiting in the rear lines. My Munich accent quite deceived them, and the lost front teeth accounted for any indistinctness of speech, so they made me welcome."

Truth is all right in its way, but fattery is generally jollier.

It takes a cop to cop a cop.

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