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EUROPE.**GERMANY.**

IT is clear that most important damage has been effected by the Royal Air Force attacks on three important dams in Western Germany on the 16th/17th May. Such a novel form of air attack might have been exploited by German propaganda as another example of British terror methods. Yet the Germans have on the whole refrained from treating it in this way. The first communiqué issued showed a desire to belittle the importance of the attack, but at the same time betrayed its gravity by referring to heavy casualties among civilians. The actual casualty figures, published on the 19th, were 370 Germans and 341 prisoners of war. The economic damage was stated on the foreign transmissions of the German wireless to be less than had been feared, and large-scale emergency repairs were said to be already in hand. Swedish correspondents in Berlin were told that no comment on the effects of the bombing was allowed as the targets were military objectives.

The two dams breached, the Möhne and the Eder, are among the most important of the twenty-six in Germany. The immediate damage caused by the floods covered part of the town of Kassel and includes the breaking of some road and railway bridges, the most important being the viaduct over the Ruhr valley on the railway between Dortmund and Hagen. House property has been destroyed, some factories flooded and hydro-electric power stations put out of action. It is reported that on the 19th May a further appeal was made for economy in consumption of electricity, and a 30 per cent. cut was demanded of offices and shops, but this appears to be only a repetition and reinforcement of the similar appeal made in February (*Summary* No. 184), and it is not certain that it is in any way connected with the attack on the dams.

The most serious effect of the destruction of the dams will appear later. A Swedish expert has estimated that repairs will take six months at least, and even if these can be done it will take more than one winter's rain to replenish the reserve of water. In this respect a drought during this summer would, of course, increase the gravity of the position. It may therefore prove impossible

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