

of cereals per month. In addition, salt and other condiments are necessary. This provides less than one-third of a soldier's ration for each individual. The purchase of this quantity of food-stuff involves a monthly outlay of about one million pounds; sea and land transportation costs an additional £225,000 per month, making a total monthly expenditure of £1,225,000.

HISTORICAL.

When the impending exhaustion of food-stuffs became evident in Belgium, it was determined to seek an understanding with the various belligerent Governments, whereby imports could be arranged. This understanding was negotiated by the Ambassadors and Ministers of the American and Spanish Governments with the respective countries.

ORGANIZATION.

In order to procure and distribute the food-stuffs to the civil population, two organizations have been created:

(a) The Commission for Relief in Belgium, with headquarters in London.

(b) The Comite National de Secours et d'Alimentation, with headquarters in Brussels.

The functions of the Commission are:

(1) to secure food-stuffs from any quarter, supplies being procured by

(a) Gifts from various independent organizations and institutions.

(b) Gifts from local committees appointed by this Commission.

(c) Direct contributions of food or money from firms and individuals.

(d) Purchase by this commission.

(2) To provide transportation from any centre into Belgium. For this purpose the Commission has been provided with £600,000 through guarantees entered upon by Belgian individuals and banks, for chartering ships and to provide railway and other transportation.

THIRTY-TWO STEAMERS.

On December 15th the Commission had 32 ocean-going vessels in its transportation service. It had a working arrangement with practically every American and Canadian railway, and controls a large fleet of barges and other means of transportation in Holland and Belgium.

(3) The funds of the commission have been provided by—

(a) The Comite National de Secours et d'Alimentation.

(b) The Belgian Relief Fund and other contributions.

(c) A subsidy from the British Government.

(d) Direct individual subscriptions.

(4) The Commission guards the food supplies throughout the belligerent areas. The supplies are transported to the head and various branch offices of the Commission for distribution.

(5) As military necessity impedes the cir-

culatation of the Belgian people throughout Belgium, the Commission provides communion between different centres.

The head office of the Comite is in Brussels, with sub-committees in each of the provinces. These provincial sub-committees carry out the details of distribution through the various communes. Each communal government embraces in normal times a relieving officer and also a medical officer. In the distribution of food advantage has been taken of the communal organizations.

The Comite is provisioning the entire civil population, divided into:—

(a) The absolutely destitute.

(b) The workpeople of small means.

(c) The middle and upper classes.

The organization in Brussels, which has been duplicated throughout the entire country, is as follows:—

FOR THE DESTITUTE.

Each destitute person is examined by the Communal officers. If the case warrants he is given a free non-transferable ticket for a definite ration twice daily at the Communal canteens.

The workpeople of small means pay for their ticket. They receive the same ration as the destitute. The cost of these rations is about 9 francs per month. It consists of 300 grammes of bread, a portion of potatoes, a small amount of coffee, salt and a litre of soup containing vegetables and a lump of meat.

Supplementary to the canteens for adults are those devoted to children under three years of age. A child receives one of five different kinds of tickets, according to the decision of the Communal doctor. These tickets call for a certain proportion of milk, cocoa, and other nourishing food adapted to the child's requirements. Children between three and twelve years of age receive their rations at the schools.

PEOPLE WHO CAN BUY.

The middle and upper classes are able to purchase food, but must buy the bread from the Communes. The Communes sell flour to the bakers, the list of the bakers' customers having been approved by the Communal officers, and the amount of bread which the bakers can deliver is fixed.

A small profit is secured from the sale of flour. The Communes pay the Comite three francs per month on all tickets issued. The object of requiring this amount is to guarantee free tickets. The Communes thus receive all bread stuffs from the Comite and also are in case of need given advances by way of loan by the Comite with which to purchase the supplementary provision required for the canteens. It is estimated that the revenue from these sales and royalties will amount to something like one-half the value of the food stuffs imported by the Commission for Relief in Belgium.