

Work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium

AND

Canada's Participation

Belgium before the war was both an intensively industrial and agricultural country. The agricultural industry however could support the whole of the population in but a minor degree, and this is scarcely to be wondered at when it is remembered that Belgium has a population of 652 inhabitants per square mile, as against less than 2 in Canada.

Belgium was not prepared for the sudden German aggression hence did not have large available stocks of food, besides which the existing stocks were promptly commandeered by the Huns in their first mad rush through Belgium without any regard of what such uncivilized action meant to the thousands of people who did not know where their next meal was to come from. Then was it, with starvation staring in the face of 7,000,000 people, that Mr. Hoover organized his Commission for Relief in Belgium and rushed into this benighted country the supplies that were to save millions.

That the Commission, — efficiently organized and generously supported as it has been throughout the world — has been able to do only the bare minimum to stave off starvation is proved by the following figures indicating the relation between the Commission imports and the normal imports before the war when Belgium was able to derive the full benefit from her agricultural industries:

MAINLY HUMAN FOOD	Normal Imports (metric tons)	Commission Imports
Wheat and flour	1,490,000	546,493
Rice	21,000	48,909
Beans and Peas	55,000	26,735
Bacon, lard, meat and fat alternatives	124,000	18,797
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