

HOLLAND'S DEFENCE IN TIME OF WAR

Water the natural barrier—What an Invading Army would encounter if it attempted to conquer quickly the Nation of Dykes and Sluices.

No country, perhaps, has greater reason to remain aloof from the European war than Holland. As with all neutral nations, the unceasing aim of the Dutch is to present a kind of impartial face to every belligerent. It is a carefully calculated policy, which includes checks not alone upon deliberate departure from tenets of strict neutrality, but upon inadvertent acts which might irritate one or more of the Governments embroiled in the conflict. Yet Holland's position is delicate to a degree not appreciated by those who have not studied the politics of the situation; factors and conditions which, perhaps, do not exist in the case of any other European country, might combine at any time to overthrow the plans of those who are steering the Dutch ship through the devious channels of Continental diplomacy.

How well, in this event, Holland could protect herself against infringement of her neutrality is a matter of opinion. Some believe she could defend it no more successfully than her neighbor Belgium did while, on the other hand, there are assertions of those familiar with their subject that Holland could provide more trouble for an armed invader than she would accept either to Germany or the allied nations at this time.

There is no thought that frontier fortresses could hold an army at bay more than a few days at most. Holland has no forts of the strength of Liege, Namur, Huy, or Dinant. The Dutch, facing superior numbers, must inevitably retreat from the frontier and railway centres, and fall back upon Amsterdam and territory beyond the famous Water Line, whereupon Holland's chief ally would be invoked—Inundation. Water—not cannon, rifles, men—is the real defender of this little kingdom. It is quite possible that it would be absolutely potent; certainly it seems improbable that a large portion of the country should fall into alien possession if the Dutch were given to the desperate expedient of letting in the sea.

Draw a line through Groningen, Utrecht, and Antwerp; all of Holland lying west of that line, or 38 per cent. of the country, would be submerged if proper openings were made in the seaward barrier of dikes and dunes. Thus Holland largely depends upon the depression below the sea for defence. An invasion would surely be met by inundation, which, it is believed, would render a large section of the country as inaccessible to any foe now as in 1672, when Prince William of Orange induced his countrymen to let the flood at this set at naught the plans of the army of Louis XIV.

As a matter of fact, the greater part of Holland would not exist were it not for the constant exertions of her people. Nearly the entire country is on a level with, or even below, the sea. In the vicinity of Rotterdam there are districts which are from six to forty feet below the level. The business part of Rotterdam, situated beyond the dikes, is flooded almost regularly every winter for some days. In all the country there is only one spot rising above 600 feet, and only two provinces are considered to be wholly safeguarded by nature from inundation. Visitors venturing outside the beaten track of Baedeker travel will not doubt recall the curious experience of walking in some byway and seeing the shipping traffic proceeding at a level of from twelve to twenty feet over their heads.

That the Dutch have faced the possibility of invasion, and have made preparations to resort to inundation in that event, is the testimony of a recent visitor to Holland, whose views are set forth in a recent issue of the London Field. He agrees with other authorities that Holland would not attempt prolonged resistance in positions which do not offer natural advantages to the defence. This would mean that all of Holland east of a line running between Maarsden, on the coast of the Zuider Zee, through Utrecht and Gorkum to Gertruidenberg, in North Brabant, would be abandoned. This marks the water line referred to above, a tract of country selected to be given up to the floods in event of necessity. Roughly speaking, this line is seventy miles long and from seven to eight miles wide. Well-known towns, such as Groningen and Arnhem, are in the line of water and would be abandoned to the floods.

Floods Would be Restricted

The flooding, while vast in its influence, would be carefully restricted as to area, a fact which renders this means of defence far from the simple expedient that one might think. The inundation would be regulated by a system of specially built sluices and dikes.

"The object," says the writer in the Field, "is to obtain a uniform depth of eighteen inches. But the country between the Zuider Zee and the estuary which the visitor to Holland, via Flushing, will remember crossing just before he came to Dordrecht (or Dort) by a viaduct about a mile wide, lies at all sorts of levels. So the flooding must be done in well-planned sections. What makes the inundation effective is that it is not at all a case of opposing a big flooded meadow to the advance of an army. All the land in Holland—at any rate, in the part with which we are concerned at present—is full of ditches, little canals, bigger canals, and large canals. Obviously, then, it is impossible to wade through a foot and a half of water covering such a country, for at any moment the water may drop down upon the neck or over the head. And eight inches is also an impossible depth for navigation of the sort which is of service to troops which desire to move in large masses, with artillery and other equipment. Finally, there is that potent last resort of letting in the sea.

"The only way in which the inundation can be coped with is by turning off the water before the flooding is complete, or by force of arms later on, when it is complete. Formerly, the flooding took a fortnight. It can be done now in two days. The water is drawn from the Rhine, but in an emergency recourse would also be had to the Zuider Zee. It is undesirable

to use Zuider Zee water if it can be avoided, for it is salt, and would inflict damage on the flooded land, from which it must take years to recover. "The result of the flooding is to make Utrecht a place of great strength. All the railways, roads (on the top of dykes, as the Dutch manner is), and rivers which cross the water-line, are protected by forts. None of these routes through the water-line is of such a character that an invader, in attempting to make use of it, would find superior numbers of much advantage. The routes can each be defended by a small force. Owing to the careful restriction of the inundation, the injury done to the land is limited. Much of the flooded territory, indeed, is of relatively small value. But it is a mistake to assume that the inundation as a whole would not be a costly business for Holland."

What Might be Accomplished

Study of maps will show that, if inundation accomplished what is expected of it, about half of Holland would be protected, not alone by the water line, but by the Zuider Zee on the north and in the south by the estuaries of the Maas and Scheidt. This protected area would include by far the most attractive and desirable sections of the country—the opulent agricultural provinces of north and south Holland, and Zeeland, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam—Holland's two great commercial centres—the ports of Flushing and The Hook, not to mention such cities as Dordrecht, Leyden, and Haarlem.

But it is possible that after all the Water Line might be forced by invader. While the possibility exists, it is nothing more than a possibility. If this happened the Hollanders would not be utterly at loss. They would fall back once more and sacrifice a still greater area of country, would sacrifice to the inflowing flood, indeed, all of Holland except the territory which encloses Amsterdam in a circle, on the circumference of which is Haarlem. The Amsterdam Water Line, it is believed, renders that city practically impregnable. It is guarded by a line of strong forts, while the rear is protected by the Zuider Zee. The flooding of the Amsterdam Water Line would mean the bringing into being of the old Haarlemmer Meer. This lake existed as late as 1816, had an area of seventy square miles and an average depth of thirteen feet. Exposed to all the winds, it was a hazardous place for the little vessels that traversed it, and the history of Holland contains no more interesting or thrilling tales than the battles which were waged among fleets of wassail craft.

The confidence of the Dutch in their water line is strengthened by the fact that upon two occasions they have let in the floods and brought disaster to strong invaders. When the

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SAYS MINIMUM WAGE LAWS ARE GREAT AID ON PACIFIC COAST



MRS. CHARLES FARWELL EDSON.

Mrs. Charles Farwell Edson is the only woman member of the Industrial Welfare Commission of California. She was the principal speaker at a meeting held in New York under the direction of the Minimum Wage Commission of the National Civic Federation, and she asserted that the enactment of minimum wage laws has resulted in an improvement of social and economic conditions in the States on the Pacific coast. An indirect result of wage legislation in California, she stated, had been the voluntary increase of the wages of women in retail stores.

hundred thousand invaders of Louis XIV were turned back the taste with which inundation operations were carried resulted in the flooding of a greater area than was necessary. The French were absolutely set at naught, but freezing weather gave them new hope. A thaw came, however, before the enemy could avail themselves of the ice.

The Field's correspondent is of opinion that in the end the Dutch would be obliged to give away, despite inundation, to the attack of a strong Power backed by all the resources of land, sea, and air warfare as applied in these modern days. He does not, however, doubt the ability of the Hollanders to put up a much stiffer defence than Belgium maintained. The frontiers of the Netherlands are guarded by a well-trained, resolute army, prepared to resist German invasion, while the sea coast is guarded against any attempt that might be made by the Allies, either to attack of their own initiative, or to enter Holland and take charge of the defence against Germany.

Any Real Way
Grateful patient—"Doctor, how can I ever repay you for your kindness to me?"
Doctor—"Doesn't matter, old man. Check, money order, or cash."—Boston Transcript.



MR. BEAUVAIS.
"I was cured of piles by using Dr. Chase's Ointment. It is a wonderful curative agent. For ailments are more annoying or more persistently torturing than piles, and when this suffering is promptly relieved by the application of Dr. Chase's Ointment there can be no

AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM LAND PER ACRE WAS \$38.41

A press bulletin issued today by the Census and Statistics Office summarizes the results of inquiries made by corresponding correspondents as to (1) the value of farm land, (2) the value of farm help and (3) the value of farm live stock in 1914.

Values of Farm Land

For the whole of Canada the average value of farm land held for agricultural purposes, whether improved or unimproved, and including the value of dwelling houses, farms, stables and other farm buildings, is returned as \$38.41 per acre, which is about equal to that of the last similar inquiry in 1910, when the value was given at \$38.45 per acre. In 1911 the average was returned by the Census as \$38.41, but this value was based upon returns from all occupiers, including farms only recently settled and therefore of less value. By provinces the average values of 1914 range from \$21 per acre in Alberta to \$159 per acre in British Columbia. In this province, however, the high value is due to orcharding, ordinary agriculture being subsidiary to fruit culture.

Wages of Farm Help

In recent years the wages of farm help have increased considerably, and they reached their highest point during the bumper harvest of 1913. But in 1914 the pendulum swung back, less labor being required on farms owing to lighter crops. Since August

the farm has had for one of its effects an increase in the supply of farm labor and consequently a fall in the wages. The demand for labor this winter has also decreased because of the increased cost of board. For the Dominion the average wages per month during the summer, including board, were \$35.55 for male and \$18.81 for female help. For the year, including board, the average wages were \$23.30 for males and \$18.35 for females, whilst the average cost of board per month works out to \$14.27 for males and \$11.20 for females, as compared with \$12.49 and \$9.53 in 1910. Average wages per month in 1914 were lowest in Prince Edward Island, viz., \$24.71 for males and \$14.45 for females; in Nova Scotia they were \$31.20 and \$14.30 and in New Brunswick \$31.93 and \$15. In Quebec the averages were \$23.56 and \$15.65, and in Ontario \$22.09 and \$16.67. In the western provinces they were for males \$39.13 in Manitoba, \$40.51 in Saskatchewan and \$40.26 in Alberta, females receiving \$22.35 in Manitoba, \$22.96 in Saskatchewan and \$23.63 in Alberta. The highest wages were paid in British Columbia, viz., \$47.55 for males and \$31.13 for females, these averages being substantially less than in 1910 when males received \$57.40 and females \$33.

Values of Farm Live Stock

Values are well maintained so far as comparison with the three years ended 1910 is concerned; but during 1914 there has been a substantial reduction in the value both of horses and of swine. It is a cause of general complaint that the demand for horses other than for military purposes has fallen off, and that prices are less by from 25 to 40 or 50 p.c. than they were in 1913. Owing to the high price of grain the keeping of swine in the west is said to be no longer a paying proposition. Hogs have been sold for what they will fetch—frequently for as little

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as 8½ cents per lb.—and many have been marketed in an unfinished condition. On the other hand the prices of cattle have been well maintained and the average values for dairy cows and for other horned cattle are considerably above those of 1910. The averages per head for all Canada come to \$127 for horses, \$57 for milch cows, \$2 for other cattle, \$7 for sheep and \$12 for swine. The following is believed to be a rough approximation of the total value of Canadian farm live stock in 1914: Horses \$371,430,000, cattle \$297,131,000, sheep \$14,551,000 and swine \$42,418,000, or an aggregate of \$725,530,000 for all descriptions.

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