

Reviewing the Food Situation

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AS a rule statistics are dry and uninteresting, but when statistics have to do with the success of a great undertaking in which the civilized world is now engaged—when they indicate the possibility of actual existence of no inconsiderable part of the race—they take on an added interest. In some sections there is developing a feeling of anxiety and restlessness with regard to the disposal of the present and prospective stock of food crops. Some people are inclined to doubt the necessity of urging greater crops and conservation of present supplies

to the point of depriving ourselves of some of the customary articles of diet. To one who takes time to collect the statistics available and balances production against consumption, plus necessary carry-over, the situation looks vastly different.

Since the beginning of the war, the Allied cause has attracted to its banners a population totalling nearly four hundred and twenty-five million, exclusive of India. Natural populations total over forty-eight million. Allowing 4 1-2 bushels of wheat per person per annum

this aggregate has a food requirement of approximately 2,102,000,000 bushels of wheat. Latest figures published by Allied Governments show a total production of approximately 2,144,000,000

bushels in both allied and neutral countries, this again exclusive of 380 million bushels recorded for India. Such figures would seem to show that the need is amply provided for, and a reserve stock of over 42 million bushels is probably available. But such an analysis of the situation loses sight of the great seed requirements for next year's wheat



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crop. It is safe to figure that at least one-tenth of production is necessary for re-seeding. This estimate is altogether too high for those countries practicing intensive wheat production, but is probably low for the great average. Such a seed requirement in itself amounts to 214 million bushels. This wheat cannot be eaten, but must be reserved for coming crops. In face of these additional requirements the excess of 42 million bushels over probable consumption, immediately becomes a deficit of over 172 million bushels if