

MAIN SAFEGUARDS MUST CONTINUE.

Just before his resignation as British Food Controller, the Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes wrote:—

"I desire first to pay my tribute to the spirit and fortitude shown by our people at home during the past four years. Upon that steady temper, the magnificent exertions of our Navy and Army, from the battles of August, 1914, to the collapse of the enemy powers this autumn in no small measure depended. Few things contributed more to its maintenance than the organization of our food supply which Lord Rhondda so notably developed. Few things led more directly to the downfall of our enemies than the failure and unequal distribution of their supplies of food.

"Now that fighting has ceased, everyone hopes that food restrictions will be relaxed. I share that hope, and I am confident that my successor, whoever he may be, will not maintain the present restrictions for a day longer than the public interest demands. But this is not a moment to take any risks with the people's food, and it is my duty to remind you that the world's food supply must still, for a time, give ground for anxiety.

"We have recaptured from the enemy provinces which he has held for several years in occupation, many of which he has stripped of their food supplies and of their means of food production. In large territories of Europe there is danger of famine this winter.

"The Ministry of Food have already abolished some of the minor and more troublesome restrictions which the public have hitherto borne with patience. I hope that it will very soon be possible to abandon yet further restrictions of this kind. But it will clearly be necessary, at least during the coming winter and spring, to continue the main safeguards for a just and equal distribution of our food supplies which the necessities of war have led us to establish.

"An impression is already abroad, and is gaining ground, that these safeguards are no longer necessary. That is a dangerous opinion. I appeal therefore to Food Control Committees to support the Ministry of Food in maintaining unimpaired such restrictions upon the supply, the prices and the distribution of our staple foods as the Government find it necessary from time to time to keep in force. I appeal through the Committees to the public to show as willing a spirit in supporting these necessary safeguards as they have shown in their maintenance during the year of war."

What the British farmer did to help to win the war and what yet remains to be done are summarized in the "Journal of the Board of Agriculture":—

"In the success farmers have taken their share by the production of food at home. They will be gratified to know, from the preliminary statement recently issued by the Board, that taking the five crops—wheat, barley, oats, beans, and peas together—the gross production in England and Wales this year is quite 35 per cent more than in 1917. Whether judged by the yield from an acre or by total production, all crops were better than in 1917. The fact that peace is now within arm's reach, as it were, is nevertheless no warrant for any relaxation of agricultural effort, for wastage has been great, shortage will be long-continued, and the demand for food will tax the world's resources. In the United Kingdom, therefore, the food production campaign must continue in the future until our arable soils produce more nearly their maximum, until the unprofitable grass lands are ploughed and the rest improved for the production of milk and meat, and until we are less dependent on imported essentials than hitherto. In the words of the Right Hon. R. E. Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture, in a letter recently addressed to Lord Bledisloe: "Peace has its dangers as well as war. The need for home-grown food, both human and animal, is as urgent as ever. We cannot relax our efforts. We must continue to strain every nerve, and put out every muscle to produce every pound of bread and meat, every gallon of milk, and every pound of vegetables we can. We must see to it that everywhere our existing arable land is cleaned and cultivated to the full, and that cultivation of each holding is raised to the best level of farming in the district."

The French Minister of Blockade has appointed a Commissioner-General for the reconstruction of the liberated regions. His chief duties will consist in reorganizing the food supply and transport conditions.

Australia's exportable surplus of wheat is estimated for the end of the year at 165,266,000 bushels. A report made on November 11 by the Australian Wheat Board, and received by the Department of Trade and Commerce shows that stocks of wheat held by shippers and millers from the 1915-16-17 pools were 162,187,000 bushels. This represents about one-third of the 1916-17 crop and the whole of the 1917-18 crop so far unsold.