

ENGLAND'S FOOD SITUATION.

NO PROPOSAL RECEIVED.

Luxuries Must Go, on Account of Serious Shortage of Food.

London, Feb. 23.—David Lloyd George, the British prime minister, today presented to the house of commons in a speech lasting an hour and a half his programme for coping with the problem of shortage of shipping space.

The speech was a serious and grave effort, the premier giving his audience little opportunity for enthusiasm and endeavoring to concentrate attention on the serious situation with which the nation is faced, owing to the shortage of food stocks, and the German submarine menace.

The premier's programme for dealing with the situation was under two heads, the first to increase home food production and the second the curtailment of non-victual imports.

Speeding Up the Farmer.
Under the first head Mr. Lloyd George outlined a scheme for speeding up the farmer by guaranteeing him good prices for his commodities over a period of years, inviting him to plow and sow every inch of available land. He announced that the land owner would be actually forced to cultivate his land.

The speeding up of the leisurely British farm laborer, who has been regarded the poorest paid laborer in England, was provided for by the premier by guaranteeing him a minimum wage for twenty-five shillings per week, instead of fourteen to eighteen shillings.

Mr. Lloyd George said he expected to reduce the demands on cargo space by several million tons. Foodstuffs, of which 16,000,000 tons were imported last year, will be cut down nearly a million tons by lopping off certain luxuries. Paper users must get along with only half the present supply, thus saving 640,000 tons. Certain savings also will be effected in the import of ore, which now amounts to 8,000,000 tons annually, and in lumber, which is 4,000,000 tons.

At Lowest Tide.
The stocks of food in Great Britain at the present time are lower than they ever have been before, Mr. Lloyd George said. It was essential for the life of the nation, he declared, that every possible effort be made to increase home production. The importation of apples, tomatoes and fruits will be prohibited entirely.

The opinion was expressed by the premier that food prices were not likely to decrease for a long time after the war, inasmuch as Germany would then be a heavier purchaser than ever before. Therefore, it was safe to grant to the farmers a minimum price over a definite period of time, which was the only way to bring about immediate action.

For wheat the government will guarantee the farmer the following minimum prices per quarter: For the present year, sixty shillings; for 1918 and 1919, fifty-five shillings; for 1920, 1921 and 1922, forty-five shillings.

Brewing Cut Down.
Brewing will be cut down to 10,000,000 barrels annually. A similar reduction will be made in the output of spirits, effecting a saving of 600,000 tons of foodstuffs.

The importation of aerated, mineral and table waters will be prohibited. Powers will be given to the board of agriculture to compel land owners to cultivate their ground.

The minimum wage for farm labor announced by Mr. Lloyd George, twenty-five shillings a week, represents an increase of 50 to 80 per cent. over the present prevailing payment.

The importation of paper, the premier announced, must be curtailed by a further 640,000 tons annually.

The premier announced that the government would guarantee a price of thirty-eight shillings, six pence, for oats this year, thirty-two shillings for the next two years and twenty-four shillings for the three following years. The price of potatoes would be guaranteed for the coming season only at six pounds a ton.

Oranges and Bananas.
The only exceptions made in the prohibition of fruit importations will be in the case of oranges and bananas, in which the amount brought in will be restricted 25 per cent. The same restriction will apply to nuts. Canned salmon importations will be reduced 50 per cent. The importation of foreign tea, coffee and cocoa is prohibited, and even the amount of India tea which may be brought in is reduced.

The premier said it was expected to save 900,000 tons of shipping yearly on foodstuffs.

Enumerates Essentials.
As essentials, the premier enumerated food, clothing, maintenance and equipment of the civil and military population at home and abroad and raw material for munitions, for war equipment and for industries which are essential to the national life.

"These are essential," declared the premier. "Anything beyond is a

Tokio Declares Japs Have Not Been Invited to Wage War Against U. S.

Tokio, March 2.—Japan has received no proposal from either Mexico or Germany, directly or indirectly, to join in a possible war against the United States, Viscount Motono, Japanese foreign minister, informed the Associated Press today.

Viscount Motono said he considered such an idea ridiculous, it being based on the outrageous presumption that Japan would abandon her allies. If Mexico received the proposition, Viscount Motono added, that country showed intelligence in not transmitting it to Japan.

non-essential and unnecessary article which the nation can dispense with. If we cannot, then we ought not to wage war and ask sacrifices of those fine fellows who represent us abroad. It is idle to suggest that while millions of our best citizens are facing the conflict abroad for a great cause that we who are comfortable at home should not be prepared to surrender things which are not a necessary part of our existence."

After referring to the government committees who examined these questions, the premier turned to the question of paper, and said:

"I had no idea that such quantities of paper were utilized for newspapers and wrappings. They both consume an enormous tonnage. I cannot say whether I ought to treat newspapers as a luxury, a comfort, a stimulus, a necessity or a nuisance in life. They have been an enormous help to us in the effective waging of the war. There is no better proof of this than the brilliant success achieved by the chancellor of the exchequer in his recent war loan.

Cut Down Size of Paper.
"Still when we have a chance to choose between them and very stern necessity, I am afraid we shall have to deprive ourselves of a certain number of their pages and substantially to reduce the imports of paper and material. We propose to halve the present supply of 1,200,000 tons and reduce the annual imports to 640,000 tons, the reduction to be distributed equally between the printing and packing trades. We recognize that it is a serious handicap, but feel that it is imperative."

The importation of printed posters, paper hangings and certain kinds of foreign printing matter, books and periodicals, Premier Lloyd George added, would have to be prohibited. Otherwise it would be unfair to the trade in Great Britain.

To Begin Immediately.
The premier said these restrictions would be imposed immediately and steps would be taken to prevent speculative buying. If the whole programme was carried out, he said, "I honestly say we can face the worst the enemy can do."

"I want the country to know our food stocks are low," he said, "due not to the submarine, but bad harvests. It is essential that we increase production, and the government proposes to guarantee the farmer a minimum price for a definite period, and a nominal wage of twenty-five shillings will be fixed for the laborer."

The premier said it was necessary to get as much work as possible out of the ship yards. Six million four hundred thousand tons of timber had been imported, and if this was to be saved the problem must be dealt with. The French government had placed two forests at the disposal of Great Britain, and he was afraid France must be asked for greater sacrifices.

The next heaviest item of import is iron ore. Regarding this item the premier said:

Iron Ore Imports.
"We are importing millions of tons, but the importation cannot be diminished unless more iron ore is found in our country. There is plenty of low grade ore, however, in this country, and if the supply of labor can be augmented we can increase enormously our output. The saving of tonnage would be large, but unfortunately, it would come late in the year."

"Farmers can increase even now by hundreds of thousands of tons for this year," said Premier Lloyd George, "the food supplies of the country. If all the plans are carried out a very considerable quantity of tonnage will be saved, but future tonnage is urgently needed. The French ambassador has been here begging for more ships, and the Italian ambassador has just left after making the same request. We need an immediate and substantial saving of tonnage. Let us come down ruthlessly on imports which are not essential. It is idle to suggest that we who are comfortable at home should not be prepared to surrender the things unnecessary." The premier also announced that the importation of books, periodicals and other printed matter would be prohibited entirely.

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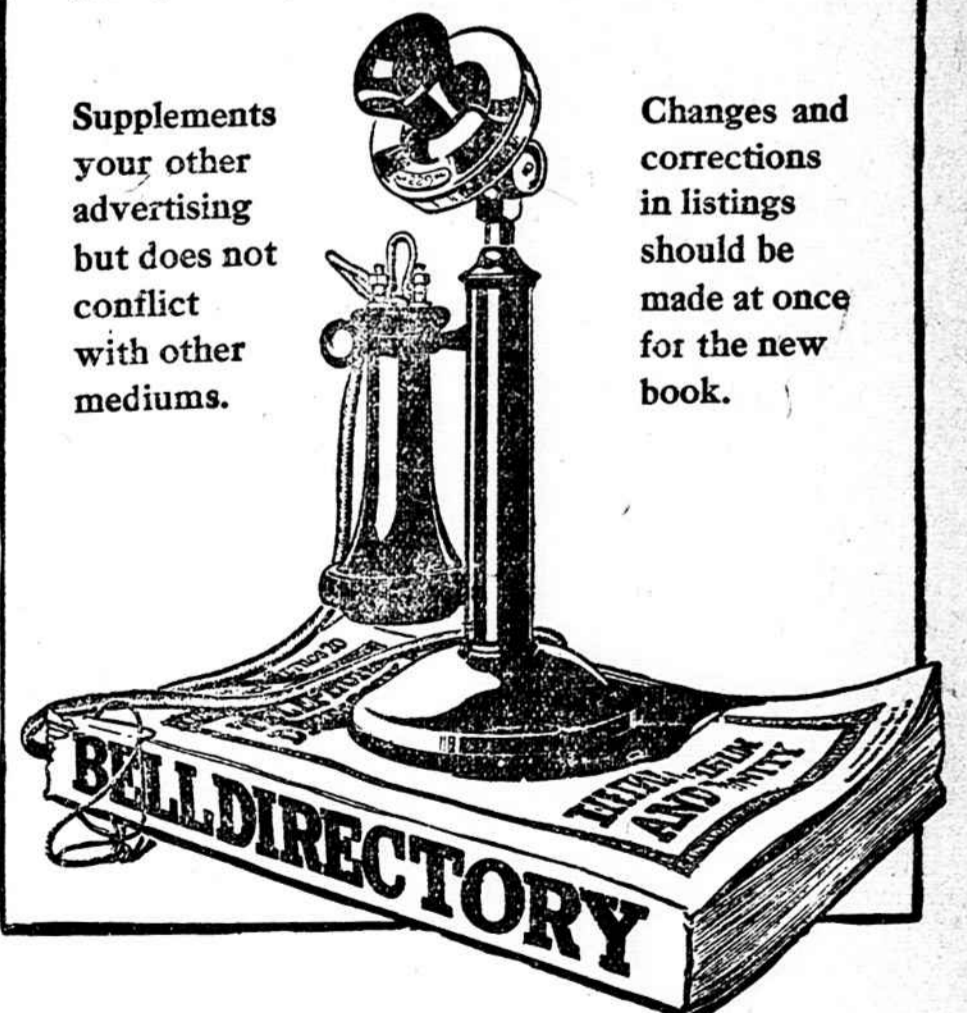
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