NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Reviewed by
CARTER FIELD

Explosives for defense held up by nitrate shortage . . . British warplanes use larger cannon than generally realized.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

WASHINGTON.—A visitor from Mars, studying war and anti-war hysteria in the United States today, might have some startling observations to make.

He would certainly report, in his letters to the folks back on Mars, that the people of the good old U. S. A. and its government as well were very stupid in permitting extraneous issues to hold up their preparations to defend themselves against attack.

He would be mystified, for example, when he found out that the No. 1 essential for warfare—explosives—was being held up by a controversy over government ownership! And not government ownership NOW, but the possibility of government ownership AFTER the war!

It so happens that explosives, according to army and navy experts, are lagging way behind airplanes, ships and even tanks. Everybody has known this for a long time, as a matter of fact ever since the war in Europe broke out. Democracies move slowly, we are told, and there was little hurry to do anything about it.

MODERNIZE MUSCLE SHOALS

But recently the government decided to do something about that old-fashioned nitrate plant at Muscle Shoals. Everyone knew the processes for which that plant was intended were obsolete, but it seemed a simple matter to bring them up to date. It was, but it could be done only with materials the duPonts could supply, if it were to be done quickly. The duPonts were eager to help, BUT—they wanted assurances that after the war was over the government would not use the duPont's own devices to produce cheap nitrates for fertilizers, and thus compete with the duPonts' own fertilizer business.

But no! The government had no idea of giving any such assurances. It wanted the duPonts to furnish the very elements the government has needed, all these years, to go into competition with the duPonts.

So that particular supply of nitrates for explosives was held up. The new machinery to modernize the Muscle Shoals plant is now "on order."

Then there is another case which would puzzle our Martian visitor. For airplanes aluminum is of the essence. The O. P. M. has just issued priorities to restrict other than military uses of this metal. The day after those orders were issued Harold Ickes told reporters he had declined an offer from the Aluminum company to install another plant near Bonneville. His reason—that if the aluminum company took any more power from Bonneville than already negotiated for, there might not be enough for municipalities desiring public ownership plants!

Wonder what our Martian would think about that!

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British Planes Carry Large Cannon

To anyone who has ridden in an airplane, the notion of shooting a cannon from one conjures up all sorts of horrible possibilities. Perhaps very few people for that reason realize the size of the cannon actually in use by the British in airplane fighting. The newer fighting planes made in the United States for the British must of course be equipped to carry these guns.

Actually the cannon used by the British so far are of 37-millimeter caliber. That means that the diameter of the projectile is approximately 1½ inches.

Thus the shell fired by a 37-millimeter cannon from an airplane is nearly five times the diameter of the rifle or machine-gun bullet.

EXPERIMENT WITH '75'

It is still more impressive to realize that this cannon is almost half the size of the favorite fieldpiece of the French army, the famous "75." Actually, our own army has fired a 75-millimeter gun from an airplane.

Incidentally, while no official announcement has been made that the army plans using 75s in airplanes as a regular practice, there was of course no earthly point in making the experiment if the ordnance officers did not have that in mind. Some of the bigger of the new airplanes, it is estimated, could be equipped with them to advantage, and probably are being so equipped.

It is also assured here, by experts, though there has been no announcement from London on this point either, that the new big British fighters are being equipped with 75s.

Obviously this sort of information is a military secret of the deepest nature, never to be disclosed until the full advantage of its surprise nature has been attained in actual fighting.

From Sharecropper to Packing Magnate, Americans Work Hard for Their Living

By HOPE CHAMBERLIN
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

CHICAGO.—In most American homes, the "Mrs." holds the purse strings . . . less than 50 per cent of American houses have bath tubs . . .

The least amount of money that can sustain life is the three cents a day per person that the colored sharecroppers in Mississippi live on by eating flour and molasses in winter . . .

As much money is spent in ice cream and soft drinks as in building houses . . .

These and other down-to-earth facts are the findings revealed in "How America Lives," just off the presses of the Henry Holt publishing house. The full report on how Americans make their money—and spend it; what they eat, drink, wear and talk about; what gives them a kick; where the shoe pinches the most, and the least; what they dream of and what they believe in; and even what they do on Sunday afternoons was compiled by specialists who, after traveling to all parts of the nation during 1940, wrote the "How - America - Lives" series for The Ladies' Home Journal.

The 16 families range from that of Henry Bracey, Negro Mississippi sharecropper, whose cash income last year totaled $26, to the family of Thomas Wilson, millionaire head of the Wilson Packing company of Chicago.

Summary of Study.

And here's a summary of the study which was conducted in the homes of real, warm, typical Americans:

As against the 1940 U. S. census statement that $22 a week is the salary of the average man in America, the survey disclosed that a man with a family of two children needs to earn at least $35 a week before he can own his own home, carry insurance, and give his children welcome advantages. And he can do this only

How America Lives . . . "What shall I wear?" It's the daily question of a whole nation of women who have made up their minds that they want to look pretty and stay young. And so America is giving them what they want . . . at the price they want to pay. They can buy a unique value in a simple felt hat, for example, for about $5, or even $3.95, and know they are getting quality!

if there is no sickness and if he has saved up an initial lump sum for the down payment on his house.

Dream of all American families is to own a home. Chief hurdle is saving up down payment.

Low points in American living are American houses—expensive and inexpensive. Although $3,000,000,000 annually goes into new homes, less than 40 per cent of the houses in America are in good condition. More

How America Lives . . . They spend as much on ice cream and soft drinks as on building houses. As a nation, they like to "eat well," and, particularly in these times, do eat better than any other nation in the world. The average city family spends one-third of its annual income, or $508, a year for food. It thrives on good plain cooking—three square meals a day. Few families keep accurate food budgets. They don't need to—the women are thrifty shoppers.

than 80 per cent were built without help from architects. Functionally they are inadequate. Aesthetically, they are unfortunate. They lack enough closet space; they are hard to heat; the roof leaks; and they are so poorly planned that the homemaker walks an extra hundred miles a year between the front door and the kitchen.

Kitchens Best Equipped.

High points in American living are American kitchens—best equipped, most modern and most used room in the house. Living room is shabbiest, dining room barest and least used.

Ninety-five per cent of the women in America employ no household help. Average American homemaker's week (in home where there are growing children) runs 50 to 60 hours—and 24 hours a day, seven days a week she is "on call" when the children are little. (Grandmother's hours were nearly a hundred!)

American boys and girls still help with the chores, even if they live in city apartments.

The typical American family's credit is good. Majority of families "pay as they go," after saving with a particular goal in view. Installment buying records show 98½ per cent fulfill their payments. Foreclosures in FHA mortgages over five years have amounted to less than half of 1 per cent.

Largest single item of American families' yearly spending is food—14 billions, or 28 per cent of the national income. Conclusive proof that America as a whole sets a good table is the fact that the average city family spends one-third of its annual income for food. Ten dollars a week feeds a family of four adequately, but without many frills. It can be done for less . . . a Cedar Rapids, Iowa, woman's food budget was $7 a week for four people.

Food Budget 'Touchy.'

Touchiest subject among American homemakers is the food budget, about which they become more defensive and passionate than about a national presidential election.

American homemakers have been made acutely vitamin conscious. Per capita consumption of vegetables, other than potatoes, has increased from 26.36 pounds in 1919-20 to 1923-24 to 31.36 pounds in 1934-35. Production and shipment of oranges jumped from 10 million boxes in 1900 to 55 million in 1935.

The big Sunday dinner is passing. More and more families go on automobile outings instead. Saturday night dinner has replaced Sunday noon as the big dinner of the week.

Gingerbread and baked beans are still America's number one choice; beef, number one meat; apple pie and chocolate cake, number one desserts.

When the pinch comes, American families economize on clothes first. But American women love clothes and have a vast choice in inexpensive styles (48 million felt hats in the $3.95 to $5 quality were sold last year.) There is no more Main Street of fashion.

Fashion a Fault?

American women's chief fashion fault—doing a good thing to death. If veiling is the fashion, they lose themselves in the mists. If open toes are in style, they go for the most extreme and open styles—and wear them every hour of the day and night. They pile on too much junk jewelry . . . lack co-ordinating powers when shopping for clothes.

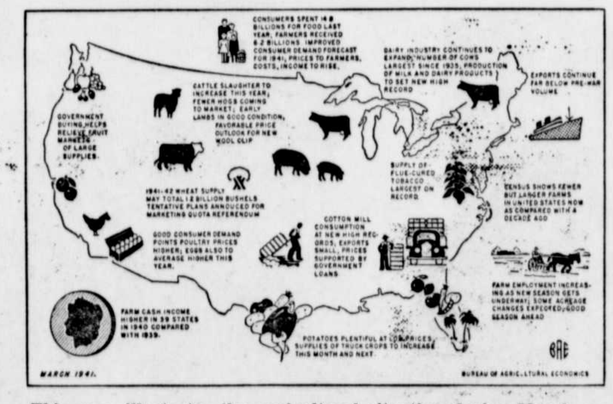
Two permanents a year, averaging from $3 to $5 are fixed charges in the budget, although weekly trips to the beauty shop are usually supplanted by the home shampoo and bobby pin method.

America is reappraising itself . . . taken as a whole—some 30 million

How America Lives . . . What does Mrs. America do on an average day? She has no help with her housework. (95 per cent of American women don't.) Then it's likely she's up at 7 a. m., and the light in her kitchen window will be shining long after sundown. She gets the meals, washes the dishes, cleans the house, markets, irons and mends, to mention but a few of the deeds which require 60 or more of her weekly hours.

families—America lives pretty well. There's room for improvement, yes. That, like the new vacuum cleaner, another pair of shoes for sis or an addition to the house, will come.

March Guide to Agriculture



This map illustrates the agricultural situation during March as described by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Government Defines Proper Use of Flag in Commerce

WASHINGTON. — The American flag can't be displayed promiscuously without violating the law even though it represents the "land of the free." To explain and clarify legal restrictions in connection with the use of the flag for advertising or other commercial purposes, the department of commerce has published a new handbook entitled, "The Flag of the United States—Its Use in Commerce."

Numerous instances have been reported to the department of commerce of the questionable employment of the national emblem for commercial purposes. In most cases the violation of the law was done unwittingly.

While there is no federal legislation covering the use of the flag, every state in the Union has passed laws prohibiting its use for advertising purposes. Similar laws appear on the statute books of Alaska, Puerto Rico and Samoa.

Real 'Boom Town' Rises in Wasteland

HOLLY RIDGE, N. C. — Four months ago you could have bought all the land you wanted around here for three or four dollars an acre—unless you happened to be dealing with a native whose conscience would not allow him to accept such an exhorbitant price. Today this same land is being sold in 20 foot lots and for serious money, too.

No, nobody has discovered oil in these parts. This just happens to be the place the federal government picked for the army's new anti-aircraft training camp, now under construction.

There is good farm land both to the north and south of Holly Ridge but the real estate in this immediate vicinity is little more than a scrub-timbered waste. But the U. S. army had other ideas. The section is not only easily accessible by highway and railroad, but offers an ideal spot over which to shoot anti-aircraft guns without danger of hitting anyone on land or sea. The shape of the coast and the lay of the land is well suited to the army's purpose. Guns will fire out into Onslow bay, wide coastal indenture many miles from the lanes of coastwise shipping.

Naturally the government didn't suffer from Holly Ridge's new land boom. In the first place, the price didn't rise until the army had acted and, in the second, the government has the right of condemnation. So its two-mile frontage on U. S. highway No. 17 and all the territory between here and the ocean came cheap enough. It's the land adjacent to the reservation that's suddenly become so valuable.

In November the entire population of the cross roads of Holly Ridge and for a mile in every direction totaled 28. This summer, according to government plans, there will be 20,000 troops stationed here. Already there are several thousand men building the camp and the trailer camps in which many of them live stretch up and down the highway for miles. Pine plank stores and bunk houses spring up over night and business is booming on every hand.

How long it all will last nobody knows.

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

YOU ARE MORTGAGED FOR $538!

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE Jesse Jones reports the income of the American people for 1940 was $74,000,000,000, including what was paid by the government for relief and farm subsidies.

That is just about what it would take to pay what the federal government, which is us, owes. We are in the red, including appropriations that have been made but not yet spent and including the obligations of the several government corporations for which the government is responsible, something over $70,000,000,000. To pay what we owe would take all the income of all the American people for the entire year of 1940, the highest income year since 1929.

Former President Herbert Hoover told me some three years ago that he believed the nation could carry an indebtedness of close to 70 billions before going broke and becoming the victim of extreme inflation. If that is correct—and I believe Herbert Hoover comes nearer knowing than most men—we are on the verge of bankruptcy and inflation.

Who is responsible?

The congress of the United States, the men we elected as senators and representatives.

No dollar can be taken out of the national treasury until congress has approved the expenditure. The President cannot spend our money unless congress has authorized the expenditure. The billions that have been spent on foolish boondoggling projects and for other things had to have the consent of the men we sent to Washington to represent us in the senate and house of representatives.

That mortgage of more than $70,000,000,000 means some $538.00 for each one of us to pay, or about $2,690 for each family of five.

When the time comes for us again to select senators and representatives, it behooves each of us to examine the records of those asking for our votes, and to turn thumbs down on those who have put us in the red to the extent of our entire income for one year.

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FORTY-NINTH STATE

SEN. WILLIAM H. SMATHERS of New Jersey proposes that we make Cuba the forty-ninth state, but Cuba very definitely does not want to be either the forty-ninth or any other state in the Union.

Out in the Pacific ocean, standing as the outer guardian of our western coast, is Hawaii, an American territory that does want, and has repeatedly asked, to be made the forty-ninth state. In the last World war, Hawaii produced a larger percentage of volunteers for military service than any one of the present 48 states. The islands were offered to, and accepted by, the United States under a promise of statehood. If we are to have a forty-ninth star in the flag, why should it not represent Hawaii? Vernon Yap, a Chinese I know in the Islands, does not feel that he will be an American until he can vote for a President.

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'QUEEN BESS'

MRS. BESS CROSS of Deering, Alaska, has been paying her every-fifth-year visit to the States. Sounds prosaic, but to her sourdough friends in and out of Alaska, and to the fashionable feminine apparel dealers in New York, it is an event eagerly awaited.

To every sourdough—miner, trapper and those in other lines, to every Eskimo, in fact, to all Alaska, Bess Cross is known as "Queen of the Arctic." She went to Alaska as a bride of 16. Her first husband operated a trading post and she assisted him. When he died, Bess carried on, and expanded. Today she has a large string of such posts all over the Alaskan wilds, and especially along the shores of the Arctic ocean.

In Alaska, Bess wears a fur parka, walrus-hide boots, sealskin trousers as a matter of necessity, not from choice. She is definitely feminine, and about once every five years she comes to the States, always traveling by plane. She goes to New York and indulges in a regular orgy of clothes buying. She selects the daintiest, most luxurious of feminine apparel; lives in a fine suite at the Waldorf; entertains lavishly for a period of from two to three weeks, and then flies back to her string of Alaskan trading posts, to the white men and Eskimos who love and respect her, and to whom she is always "Queen Bess of the Arctic."

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A GREAT WINDOW DISPLAY

THERE IS A window display in Wilmington, Del., which I look at every time I visit that city. In it there are always a considerable number of things, each one of which represents an addition to the comfort and standard of living and an increase in employment in America. All of these things are the products of an industrial laboratory operated by private capital. The maintenance of such laboratories means continued prosperity in America. And it's no government job.

Indians and Turkeys

The Pueblo Indians kept turkeys long before the coming of the Pilgrims. Rooms in the pueblos were assigned to the turkeys, which were regarded as sacred and kept mainly for their feathers.

Valuable Musk

A pound of natural musk would be worth approximately $40,000. Synthetic musk, which is widely used in the manufacture of perfumes, costs only a few hundred dollars a pound.

Military Influence

The military influence is reaching far afield. A new toothpowder company has put out dentifrice in a container which, when empty, can be used as a toy soldier.

Alcatraz

In October, 1933, the department of justice took over the control of Alcatraz and it became a federal penitentiary. Prior to that it was a military prison.

First Church Broadcast

Rev. Dr. Edwin J. Van Etten, pastor of the Calvary Episcopal church of Pittsburgh, was the first to preach a sermon in Station KDKA's Church of the Air.

Lemon Juice Makes Meat Tender

A tablespoonful of vinegar or a teaspoon of lemon juice added to tough meat while it is boiling or roasting will make it more tender.

Hospitals in U. S.

According to the 1939 report of the American Medical association, in 1938 there were 4,286 general hospitals and 425,324 beds.

Fulton Market Largest

According to the Fishery Council, Inc., Fulton Market in New York city is the largest fish distribution center in the world.

Fluffy Mashed Potatoes

Hot milk added a little at a time while mashing potatoes will make them light and fluffy. Heat, do not boil, the milk.

Softening Glue

A tablespoon of vinegar poured into glue that has become hard in a bottle will soften it.

Italian Theaters

Most Italian theaters are owned by organizations such as Fascist and religious groups.

Auto Operating Costs Decrease

The cost of operating an automobile has decreased 50 per cent since 1926.

Film Attendance

The average weekly attendance of film theaters in 1938 was 85,000,000.

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