

Canada at War

NO. 2—TOUR OF LARGEST AUTOMATIC GUN PLANT IN ONTARIO

By C. Earl Rice, formerly of The Springfield Times, Lac Du Bonnet, Manitoba

An automatic gun plant in Eastern Canada, is now the largest single producer of machine guns in the British Empire today.

In the spring of 1938, the Canadian Government decided to make Bren guns for the Canadian Army. Now the plant consists of some 19 buildings, covering more than a million square feet of floor space. At the outbreak of war, the working personnel consisted of slightly over 400 persons. Today, more than 4,500 are employed on war production, and in another nine or ten months, that number will be increased to around 9,000. Nearly 40 per cent of the employees are women, and they can handle the machine tools with all the dexterity of men. More women will be used as men are called to other types of war work.

The production of a Bren Gun is an intricate job, and requires literally hundreds of operations. There is a total of 161 different parts in each gun, requiring 3,000 separate operations. In the plant, there are more than 4,000 machine tools and over 17,000 different gauges.

100 Per Cent Canadian

When the Government let the contract for the construction of these guns, it stipulated that where possible, only Canadian materials were to be used. As a result, these guns are one hundred per cent Canadian, with the exception of the walnut, imported from the United States, used for the gun stocks.

Bren Guns are as nearly fool proof as it is possible to make them. They cannot be assembled incorrectly. If one part fits into another, that must be the correct way, otherwise they would not go together. They weigh just 22 pounds.

Each gun is equipped with a spare barrel, and twenty-four magazines, each magazine holding thirty cartridges. It is a simple matter to slip one magazine off, and put another in place; the operation requiring only a few seconds.

Details of the construction of any type of ordnance cannot be given. It is possible however, to mention a few pertinent facts regarding certain parts of guns, which will give one some idea of the tremendous amount of work involved in their production. The body of a Bren Gun starts along the machine line as a rough forging weighing 45 pounds. The body is the part of the gun which houses the firing mechanism. This forging passes through 269 separate operations before it is completed. As many of these operations require more than one handling, and must be gauged following each operation, it means that literally several hundred persons have had a hand in the production of the gun body. By the time all operations are completed, what had originally been a forty-five pound forging, weighs only five and one half pounds.

Guns for Airplanes

Browning machine guns are also produced in this plant. These are the guns used in our fighting airplanes, six or eight being housed in the wings of Hurricanes and Spitfires. A Browning gun is capable of firing more than one thousand rounds per minute, and a blast from one of our fighter planes' six or eight guns, will practically cut an enemy plane in two. A Browning Gun while not quite as intricate as a Bren Gun, requires nevertheless, a great deal of care and detail in its construction. There are 178 different parts, requiring 2,500 operations for its construction. The weight of a Browning, 35 pounds, is somewhat greater than that of a Bren.

This plant also produces the Boys Rifle. It is used for an entirely different purpose than the other two guns mentioned. It is a heavy, sturdy gun, firing a single bullet. These bullets are armour-piercing however, and the Boys Rifle is used extensively in action against light tanks and armoured vehicles.

In the course of the next few months, production will be doubled. So perfect has become the system of mass production of automatic gun equipment in this plant, that the United States has sent representatives to study the details.

The same firm is also turning out marine engines on a large scale. Triple expansion engines to power Corvettes are built here, and now production is under way on the engines that are to be used to power the Tribal Class Destroyers Canada is now building for the British Navy.

Denmark's Pigs Off to Germany

Former Heavy Exporter to Britain Tied Up by Nazi Occupation

OTTAWA, (CP) — While Canada plans to provide United Kingdom with a record-breaking total of 600,000,000 pounds of bacon in the coming year, figures received in Ottawa tell the story of the decline of a former leading exporter of this product, Denmark.

Danish bacon was highly popular in the United Kingdom but following occupation by Germany in 1940 all such exports beyond Europe were cut off. To compensate for this loss, Canada shipped 425,000,000 pounds of bacon to the United Kingdom under an agreement just concluded, and undertook to provide the additional quantity required in coming months.

Information as to what has happened to the Danish livestock industry under German control is contained in the publication of the United States department of agriculture, Foreign Crops and Markets.

The publication said that all classes of Danish livestock except horses declined in 1940-41, with the largest decrease in hogs and poultry, the numbers of the latter dropping 45 per cent.

German requisitions and reduced supplies of feed have cut the number of cattle by 220,000 head since last summer. Hogs have now been reduced to 1,770,000 head, representing a 45 per cent reduction between July, 1940 and July 1941.

Total bred sows in July, 1941 showed a reduction of 17 per cent, compared with a year earlier. Suckling pigs numbered 440,000, a decrease of 42 per cent, compared with June, 1940. Hogs of slaughter weight were 1,000,000 fewer.

THANK BRITISH NAVY

JOHANNESBURG, (CP) — This South African mining metropolis "will have a very good Christmas, thanks to the British Navy," says The S. A. Newsletter which remarks "only luxury lines are unobtainable and these will hardly be missed."



RICHARD FRY

Equally at home with piano or organ, Richard Fry has made frequent appearances on CBC's National Network, and is at present being heard Monday to Saturday inclusive from the CBC's Halifax Studios at 8:15 a.m. DST. He has been the pianist for the national singing songs of the armed forces, directed by George Young, Maritimes Regional Representative of the CBC, and his performances behind the scenes in aiding and abetting a radio cause are every bit as noteworthy as his accomplishments in music. He is an A-1 trooper, and as versatile as they come.

Hitler Outsmarting Us?

Hitler said he would dictate peace terms to Britain in Buckingham Palace on August 5, 1940.

Hitler said he would take Moscow within three weeks of June 22, 1941.

Hitler said five or six weeks ago that the most momentous event of the war would be reached in 48 hours—meaning the utter defeat of Russia.

Hitler is the most deft liar and shrewdest propagandist of all time. Nazi dive bombers and Blitz Buggles don't strike until the propaganda time-bombs, placed by Hitler gang, are ready to go off.

Nazi agents are planting their lies all over North and South America. There are lots of them sowing the seeds of discord and suspicion right here in Canada.

These are quiet, wise looking guys who throw out the suggestion that gasoline saving is not necessary; that it's a frame-up. In whose interest is it to make Canadians suspicious and keep them from saving gas when Britain asks us to help her by doing so? And how could German agents in Canada serve Hitler better than by casting suspicion upon the gasoline saving campaign?

The same quiet wise looking guys who sit in hotel lounges, beer parlors, train smoking-rooms, say that War Savings Certificates are no good—that you'll never get your money back. They say better put your money into strike funds and let Mike and Joe, or some other strong arm get a real cut for you.

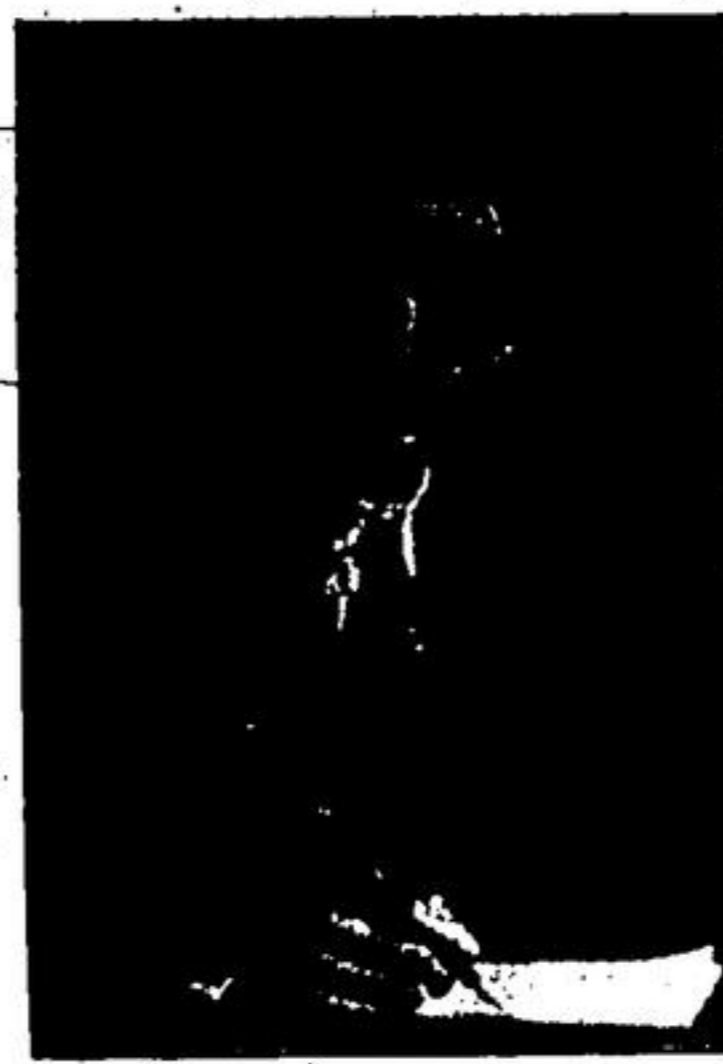
The saps pass this along and the quiet wise guy slips back to the Waterland by the way of U.S.A. and Lisbon to receive the Iron-cross for smart work done in Canada.

STEAL SACRED VESSEL

LONDON, (CP) — Dispatches from Italy, telling of wholesale thievery in the wake of increased poverty quote the Bishop of Milan as ordering all sacred vessels locked "in a safe place" so they cannot be stolen.

Across the Atlantic in a Refugee Ship

This is the first of a series of articles about conditions in Great Britain and other parts of Europe, written exclusively for the weekly newspapers of Canada by Hugh Templin of the Fergus News-Record.



HUGH TEMPLIN

Somewhere in the Atlantic, between the Azores and Bermuda—What a strange place this is for the editor of a Canadian weekly newspaper to be in this latter part of October, 1941, after more than two years of yowl!

And when you come to think of it, what a strange place for anyone to be, unless driven by dire necessity.

Most of the other 140 people on board the U. S. Steamship Excambion are here because of necessity. They are fleeing from unhappy Europe, glad enough to get away in spite of perils that may still lie ahead. They are refugees, hoping for peace in the United States. The passenger list contains the name of a Prince related to one of the still-ruling royal families of Europe. There are such names as Gomez y Gomez, and Pastuhov, and Pin Tsao, and Radajewski. There is a group of wholesome young people who have left the U. S. Embassy in Berlin while the going is good, and several Chinese families, including some cute little children, being withdrawn from the Embassy in Switzerland. There is a man from the British diplomatic service, occupying a cabin all by himself because he carries confidential information to Washington, and there is a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy in civilian clothes, returning from a mission to Britain. There are two English women forced to leave France on 24 hours' notice. They have not tasted meat for two days because they fed their entire ration, such as it was, to a Slamese cat that now accompanies them on the ship. There is a little French girl who ordered two poached eggs for breakfast her first morning on the boat and then could not eat them when they came, but sat and cried salt tears over them because her appetite was gone. And another family from Unoccupied France ate nothing but potatoes for their first few meals. There is even a stately English woman who crawled out under barbed wire entanglements to get to Portugal and so on this ship.

Editors on a Refugee Ship
In such a crowd as this, eleven Canadian editors may seem rather out of place, and truly, none of us ever expected to be on this ship. We had planned to go flying through the air from Lisbon to New York, returning as we had come. But in October flying conditions are uncertain. We seemed likely to wait in Lisbon for weeks before our turn came to go on the Clipper. One week in that city got us down. Those who were not actually sick were entirely unenthusiastic about any more Lisbon meals or climate or scenery. We were nervous after being trailed day after day by members of the German gестаapo who stayed in the same hotel as we did. When the chance came to leave by boat, we took it.

One of the editors is from St. John, N.B. He loves the sea and boats and all things connected with them, and he jumped at the chance to come by ship. All the rest of us would have preferred to travel by air.

Those in Peril on the Seas
Four days before we left Lisbon the papers of that city were all excited because a Portuguese ship had been sunk by the Germans, apparently because of tungsten ore on board, destined for the United States. Two days later, they were mourning the deaths of two British families from Portugal, returning to England until their ship was torpedoed off the coast. On the way to Lisbon, this same steamship Excambion was met by a German bombing plane which circled around it, must-high, and then flew away again. On the day we sailed from Lisbon, news came that the Germans had torpedoed the American destroyer Kearney. Two days out, an American freight boat was sunk in the Atlantic, straight south of where we were. This very morning, when we awoke, it was to see another ship coming closer. As it drew near, we could see that it wasn't the merchant vessel it pretended to be, but had business-like guns fore and aft. It had no flag, nor gave any signal, but crossed our bows and went on. We all realized these dangers, but as the days passed and our boat continued on its way, the tension relaxed. The restful, monotonous days on board ship gave us all time to recover from strenuous and exciting times overseas.

When the invitation came to me to go to England for a few weeks to represent the weekly papers of Canada, there were many who envied me because of that opportunity. If it is any comfort to them now, I can say quite truthfully that there were times when I would gladly have traded places with any of them. Travel across the Atlantic these days is something that should not be undertaken except from necessity.

Adventurous Weeks
But on the whole these have been wonderful weeks. I have crossed the Atlantic by air, one of the most romantic voyages in the world to-day. I have flown altogether some 9,000 miles by American Clipper, Royal Dutch Air Lines and British Overseas Airways. I have visited Bermuda, the Azores, England, Southern Ireland and Portugal. I have talked with Winston Churchill, many members of his Cabinet, Britain's greatest newspaper men, a former Canadian Prime Minister, and the Canadian High Commissioner, and the Canadian Corps Commander and many of his officers and soldiers, and a host of the "common people" of England who have come through bombings, have lost their homes and their relatives, yet carry on in Britain's hour of need. I have tasted the hospitality of great and small in England and have made new friends there.

There have been plenty of thrills. I have flown down the Bay of Biscay in a seaplane with not a light showing and the hostile enemy coast not far away. I have stood on a roof-top in London with the fire-watchers and have seen the distant flashes of anti-aircraft guns shooting at an enemy plane approaching the city. I have been through a "blitz" myself—have seen and heard and felt the explosions of huge enemy land mines and have come through the ordeal un-

scathed but knowing that if any one of a dozen things had been slightly different, I would not have been here at all. I have been at a bomber station and have talked to the boys who make the long trips over France and Germany to unload their cargoes of death, and I have seen the Royal Canadian Air Force fighter pilots come back to their airports after being in action.

England in Wartime
I have heard Churchill defend his actions on the floor of the House of Commons and have stood amid the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. I have walked in the London blackout and in the pleasant-English countryside, where every garden had its large late roses. I have been trailed by the German gestaapo in Lisbon and have seen a bullfight. I have ridden on trains, in buses, in cars, in the underground, and have talked to friendly folk everywhere.

These are the things I shall write about in the series of stories which will appear in this newspaper during the next three months. Always provided, of course, that the Excambion does not meet an unfriendly submarine or bombing plane somewhere this side of New York.

LOOKED LIKE HOME

ALEXANDRIA, (CP) — "Beautiful structure, isn't it?" remarked a captain in a regiment arriving at this Middle East base from a far-flung district of South Africa as they gazed at an imposing circular-towered mosque. "Yes, sir," they chorused, "we were just saying what a fine alo it would make."



Repledge for War Savings

"SALADA" TEA

CHRISTMAS PUDDING PREVIEW



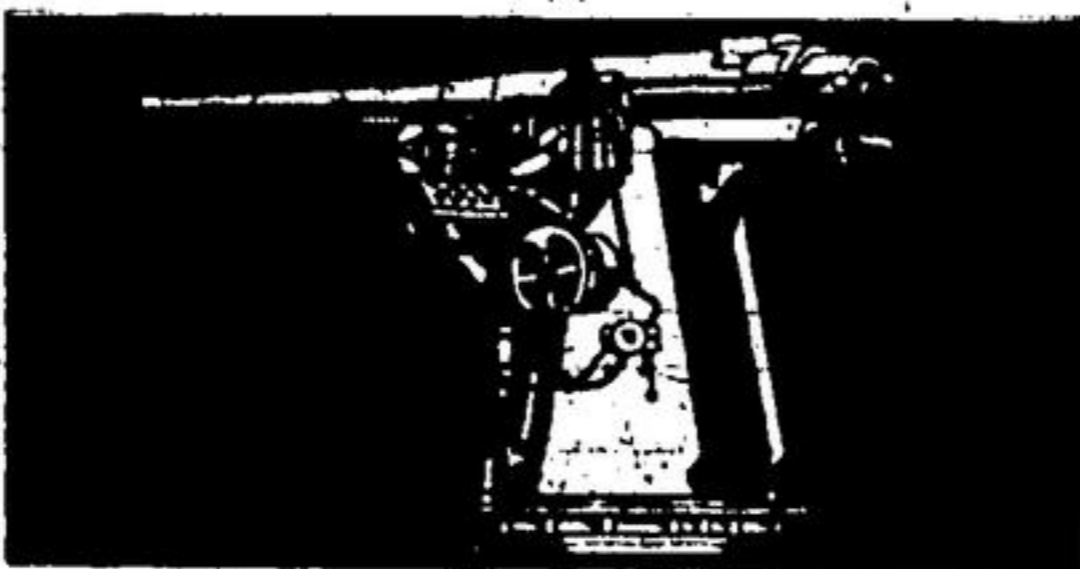
ITS cook-house magic the services agree as James Morgan, top chef of the Canadian National Railways dining cars mixes the more than two score ingredients required to make 24,000 individual helpings of pudding to be served on trains during the Christmas season. Two tons of pudding are needed to fill that order and as men of the Navy, Army and Air Force then travelling will have their share, representatives of the services were invited to see the job get under way. They crowded Chef Morgan but did not cramp his style and this season's four thousand pounds of pudding material were assembled and cooked in a work space 12 feet long by 30 inches wide—the kitchen of a dining car parked in the yards at Montreal—leaving scant clearance for stout cooks. The photograph shows, left to right, Signelman Merrill Rumson, RCNVR; Chief Instructor Chef, James Morgan, CMB; A/C-1 Joseph Clark, RCAF; and Drummer McLean Anderson, RCABC.

MAKING BREN GUNS



The young woman shown in this photo is welding cartridge clips for Bren machine guns. These light and efficient weapons are being turned out by the hundreds in Canada.

90% COMPLETED!



ON TO VICTORY! ACTON

A NAVAL GUN EVERY MONTH—FOR THE DURATION

This is Acton's Objective in the National War Weapons Drive

● We've nearly done it! Our community is close to its objective in the War Weapons Drive. But more pledges are urgently needed. Our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen are counting on us. More regular purchases of War Savings Certificates mean more weapons for our forces. Each of us must do his part—not one of us must shirk his duty.

Let's all get behind this drive for the last push to success. Remember—our present objective is just a start. Our job for the war is far from finished. We must do better and better until Victory is achieved. This means larger investments in War Savings Certificates—month in, month out, for the duration. Let's make our effort a power drive for Victory.

ACTON WAR SAVINGS COMMITTEE

Buy more and more WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES REGULARLY