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Board; the Boards' premises in many instances need to be modernised and extended so as to allow for speedy handling of eggs during the flush production period.

2. Strong attempts should be made to induce farmers to adopt more efficient methods. This will ease the position when export prices fall—assuming they do—at the termination of the present contract. If existing production costs are not substantially lowered, farmers would experience great hardship in the event of falling export price.

The present contract period provides a breathing space for the industry. Producers should be warned of the likely fall in price within the next three or four years. During that period, every attempt must be made to make the egg industry capable of competing successfully on the world market with foreign producers. If this can be achieved, then there will be no need for a reduction in current levels of production.

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### **“WORLD FOOD SURVEY.”\***

#### **A REPORT FROM F.A.O.**

A report has just come to hand from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation entitled, “World Food Survey.” This is not just another statement on the seriousness of the present world food supply position, of which we have had several lately. It tackles the matter from a long-term viewpoint, and instead of starting from present available supplies, starts from the other end, from the end of average consumption per head. The report summarises the results of a survey made earlier this year of food consumption in seventy countries, covering about 90 per cent. of the earth's population. As the report states, “Millions of people never get enough to eat, and much larger numbers, not actually hungry, do not obtain the kind of diet necessary for health.” While admittedly much of the statistical data used were vague and incomplete, it was felt that the results of the survey were “close enough to the truth to be used, with due caution, as a yardstick by which to measure changes that will be required if we are not to return to the unsatisfactory food situation which existed in the years before the war, but to have a food and agriculture policy that will meet human needs.”

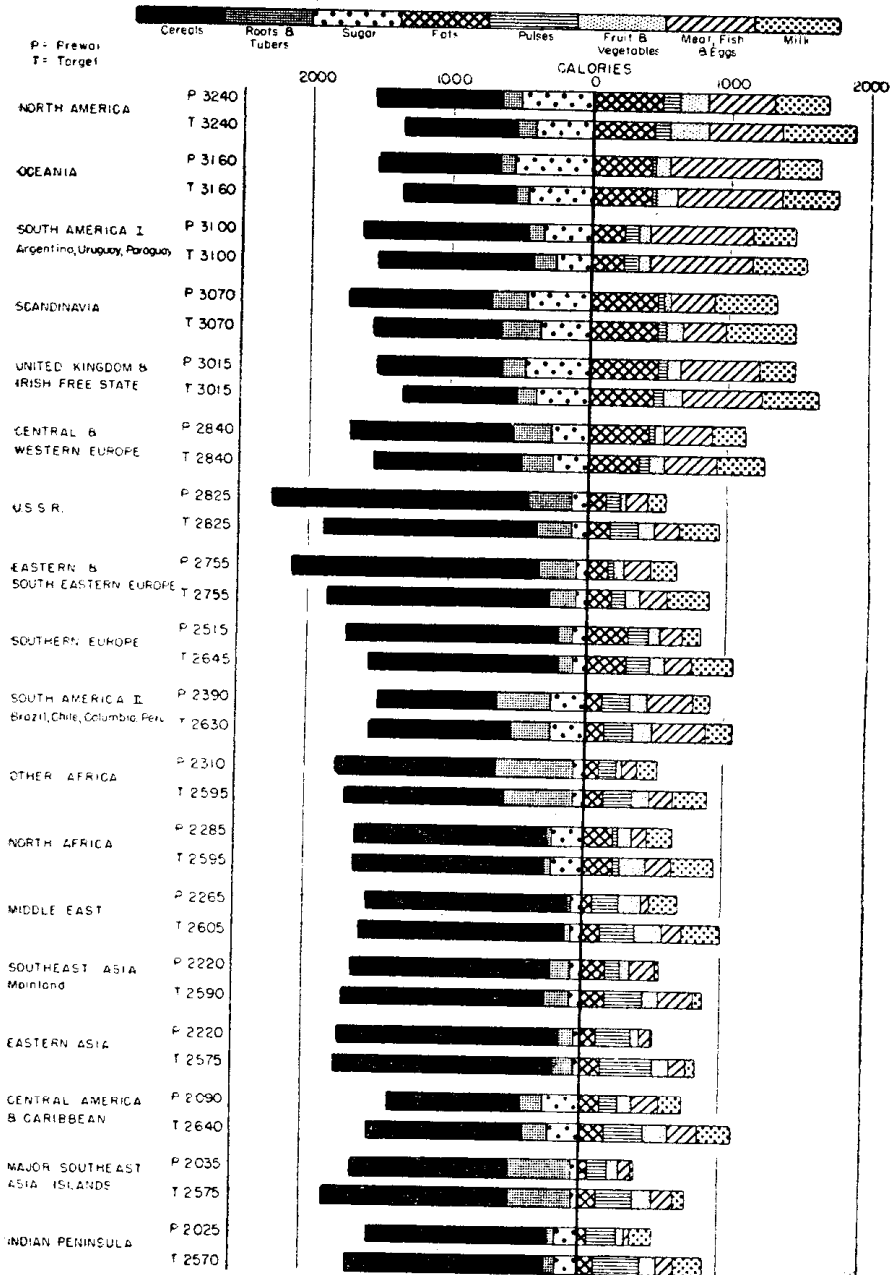
#### **The Pre-war Picture.**

It appears that before the war over half the world's population (most of Asia, a part of the Middle East, all of Central America, and probably parts of South America and of Africa not covered by the survey) had an average daily intake of less than 2,250 calories daily, calculated at the retail level. One-sixth (most of Southern Europe, three countries in Asia, part of the Middle East, part of Africa, and part of South America) had an intake of between 2,250 and 2,750 calories daily. The remaining one-third (all of North America, Oceania, much of Europe—including the U.S.S.R.—and three South American countries) were in the high-

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\* “World Food Supply,” Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, 5 July, 1946. (39 pages.)

FIG 4  
**PRE-WAR FOOD SUPPLIES AND NUTRITIONAL TARGETS IN EIGHTEEN AREAS**  
 (CALORIES PER HEAD DAILY AT THE RETAIL LEVEL)



intake group, with over 2,750 calories daily. While it must be remembered that these are averages, and conceal wide variations in local supplies in each country, they do confirm that "about half of the world's population was subsisting before the war at a level of food consumption which was not high enough to maintain normal health, allow for normal growth of children, or furnish enough energy for normal work. Poor nutrition is associated with high death rates and a low expectation of life, high mortality in infancy and early childhood and among women during the child-bearing period, increased susceptibility to many diseases, such as tuberculosis and impaired working capacity."

Turning to the distribution of diet between the various classes of foods, it was found that the high-calorie countries also had a well-balanced diet. "When there is abundance and variety of food and purchasing power is high, countries tend to choose a diet fully adequate for health." But the low-calorie countries tended to concentrate on the cheap foods rich in carbohydrates. In fact, the interesting point was discovered that the consumption of cereals did not differ greatly between those countries with high food intake and those with low intake: the main difference between good and bad diets was in the quantities of other foods consumed. Also, a fairly close correlation was discovered between national diet and national income. "There are exceptions, but in general well-to-do countries fare well nutritionally, poor countries fare badly, and the poorest groups within these countries fare the worst."

### **Food Consumption Targets.**

The next step after determining the pattern of food consumption in each country was to set up nutritional targets towards which food consumption policies might be directed. These targets were drawn up for each country in the light of existing production and supplies, and they aimed at gradual modification of existing consumption patterns rather than revolutionary change. For countries with daily consumption above 2,600 calories no change in quantity was recommended—only adjustments to improve the quality of the diet. For countries below 2,600 calories, the adjustment was mainly in quantity to bring it up to that level. The report states, "For nearly all the groups of countries at the low calorie level, an increase in cereal consumption is advocated, principally to raise the total calorie intake. Substantial increases in the consumption of fats, pulses, fruits and vegetables, milk and foods in the meat, fish and eggs group are called for except in a few countries in these groups . . . ." Of course, in most countries steps will also be necessary to improve food distribution so that all obtain a satisfactory share.

A most interesting table is then given indicating what the attainment of the various targets would mean in terms of required world food production. This is reproduced here:—

**World Food Needs in 1960.**

(Approximate per cent. increase over pre-war supplies required to meet targets, assuming a 25 per cent. increase in world population.)

Commodity.	Per cent.
Cereals .. .. .	21
Roots and Tubers .. .. .	27
Sugar .. .. .	12
Fats .. .. .	34
Pulses .. .. .	80
Fruits and Vegetables .. .. .	163
Meat .. .. .	46
Milk .. .. .	100

As the report states: "This estimate of food needs in 1960 gives some idea of the magnitude of the task to be undertaken and the opportunities ahead for food producers if the nations set out to improve nutrition on a world scale."

**The Direction of Future Advances.**

To achieve the targets for the pre-war world population would have required an estimated overall increase of 40 per cent. in food supplies. To achieve the targets in 1960 (with an assumed 35 per cent. population increase) would require an overall increase of 90 per cent. To achieve the targets in 1970 (with an assumed 50 per cent. population increase) would require an overall increase of 110 per cent. Clearly such increases would call for great expansion not only of agricultural production in exporting countries, but also of industrial production in the importing countries to trade for their food.

The changes required, such as improved farming efficiency, better land-use, and better economic conditions in all countries, have been traversed fully in other connections, but the heart of the problem is inescapably to increase individual productivity. In some countries "one farm family feeds itself and four other families at a comparatively high nutritional level . . . . by contrast, in many less developed countries . . . . one farm family manages to produce only enough to feed itself and half of another family. Thus the output of food per man is ten times greater in the advanced than in the poor countries. The conclusion is inescapable that food for the world can be produced in much greater abundance by fewer hands."

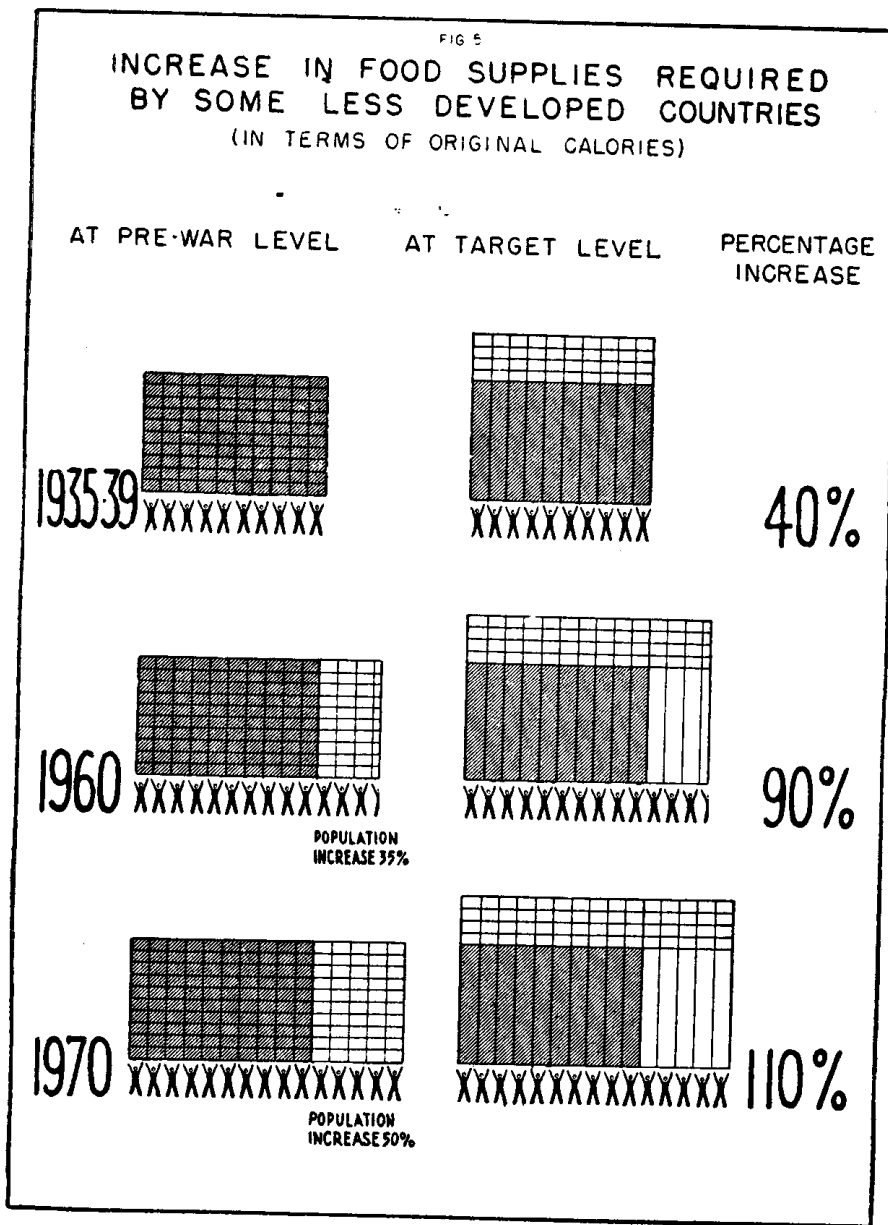
The report then states that in the under-developed countries, where pressure on the land is so heavy, there must be a diversion of labour from rural pursuits to other fields, leaving an opportunity for those remaining on the land to increase their efficiency manyfold. "This calls for rapid, large-scale development of industry and trade, and of educational and other services . . . . The investment will be profitable because it will vastly increase the productivity and the purchasing power of millions of human beings . . . . The difficulties in the way of formulating and putting into effect vigorous, concerted measures for industrial and agricultural development that will open up new opportunities for those people are very great, but they must be solved or the world faces a future of universally lower living standards or of wars and revolutions that will force the issue."

### **Practical Steps for the Future.**

The concluding section of the report traverses the position between the two World Wars, and draws its deductions as to the best course of action in the future. Following the First World War agricultural production in both the old and the new worlds expanded greatly, and with the total food supplies available at least the entire western world could have been fed at adequate nutrition levels; but instead the purchasing power was not available, and the increased food supplies became an embarrassment. At the same time, there were more countries supplying the world's food market; this should have helped stabilise world prices, but instead of that, they fluctuated more than ever. Agriculture progressed technically, too, and production costs were lowered; but instead of prices to consumers falling, producers faced ruin because their foreign markets were sealed off to protect the higher-cost home producer. Savings were available for investment in developmental works, but depression made the prospects appear too unattractive. So agriculture languished in an atmosphere of self-sufficiency, tariffs, home-consumption price schemes, unemployment, lack of purchasing power and international agreements to restrict production.

Yet there was also a growing realisation that there might be a solution to the problems of poverty amidst plenty. With advances in the science of nutrition pointing the way, the League of Nations took up the challenge with its Mixed Committee on Nutrition; and campaigns were started in a number of countries to improve diets and to remove the barriers to world trade. Then the Second World War intervened, bringing in its train the serious food shortage conditions that still exist.

But though the picture may be still one of universal shortage, it may not be long before a number of commodities—wheat and sugar, for example—are oversupplied, at least in relation to purchasing power, or effective market demand. "The potential world demand is large, and production could be greatly expanded in many tropical areas; but this will happen only if economic conditions are favourable . . . . It is likely, therefore, that producers of these and other crops will be faced again with a situation in



which, if adjustments are left to take care of themselves, the same violent price fluctuations will occur as have characterised the international market in the past." Some other commodities will remain in short supply for some considerable time.

The report reaches this conclusion: "Thus on the one hand there is a danger of a return of unmarketable surpluses of certain agricultural commodities, resulting in a disastrous break in prices which would have widespread repercussions throughout the economy and lead again to heavy pressure for restriction of farm output; and on the other, a need to expand production, as indicated by the target figures in this report, in order to raise levels of health and standards of living throughout the world. Unless positive action is taken, the world will move not in the direction of the goals but away from them, and there may again be shortages like those we face in the present emergency, which could have been largely avoided if adequate international machinery had been available."

The positive action and the machinery which the report recommends, but whose details it leaves for elaboration elsewhere, are the setting up of a World Food Board.

R. B. McMILLAN.

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### **GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.**

An Immigration Advisory Committee was recently set up by the Government, and is composed of representatives of several State Departments under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the newly established Ministry of Tourist Activities and Immigration. The Chief of the Division represents the Department of Agriculture on the Committee. At a recent meeting dealing with absorptive capacity in industry, it was pointed out in a survey that rural absorptive capacity in New South Wales had been set down at a small nominal figure.

Negotiations have been conducted by this Division on behalf of the recently constituted Navy Bean Marketing Board for the purchase of land, sheds, seed cleaning machinery and office furniture of Commonwealth Machinery Pool Headquarters, Guyra. These facilities are required by the Board in the marketing of the commodity. It is not unlikely that in the near future, arrangements will be made for the Navy Bean Board to take over also the marketing of soy beans.

The Chief of the Division recently visited Parramatta, Penrith, Springwood and Katoomba and discussed with wholesalers and retailers the possibility of decentralising the marketing of fruits and vegetables. The general view was that there was room for subsidiary markets, but that it would be essential to arrange for continuity of supply for all lines. Parramatta appeared to be an ideal centre for development. On the advice of the Division, a small wholesale unit has been established at Katoomba and the owner is satisfied with the progress made during the past six months.