

From

Mr. JOHAN NYGAARDSVOLD, Prime Minister of Norway

Replies to questions put by
E. Lewis Barton, SUNDAY EMPIRE NEWS

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Question A:

Post-war supplies to Norway have to be considered from two points of view. It is clear first of all that after practically five years of occupation during which Norway has been plundered and exploited by the Germans and also cut off from the supplies which were normally imported in peace time, the people will be in need of immediate assistance. There will be a desperate shortage of food stuffs, clothes, footwear and other necessities. In my view these necessities - first-aid supplies, as we might call them - must be in hand so that they can be transported to Norway directly the country is liberated.

One of the main reasons why countries already liberated have experienced such great difficulties in getting supplies is that inadequate arrangements were made to have sufficient stocks of goods to meet their emergency requirements already built up in advance. It is true that a great deal of energy has been devoted to this question and ~~that~~ that all kinds of bodies have concerned themselves with it. UMRRA was supposed to tackle the problem, but on top of this organisation we have had the Combined Boards and Shaef, all claiming the right to control the movement of supplies. The result is that a vast organisational structure has been built up, but with no clear definition of function and of authority. In ~~its~~ consequence, the bodies which should have dealt with relief to the liberated countries have no freedom of action and the results so far achieved are totally inadequate. Now that this impasse has been reached it would be better in my opinion if the individual nations were allowed to obtain their own supplies of the necessary goods in, for example, the United States and Great Britain, and were also able to take charge of the administration and distribution within their own countries.

The second aspect of the problem is that of getting production going again in the liberated countries. As far as Norway is

concerned a large part of the means of production are worn out and perhaps even destroyed. The import of finished goods will not enable a country like Norway to restore the means of supplying her own needs in the future. After we have taken care of the first emergency supplies it will be necessary to lay the greatest weight on restoring production in industry, agriculture and fisheries. In all these fields Norway had a fairly large output, which in the case of a number of goods entirely covered her own internal needs.

As soon as possible we must obtain raw materials and replacements for the worn out machinery and equipment. Agriculture is desperately short of cattle fodder and also of artificial fertilisers and machinery. Our fisheries will have to replace their worn out equipment by means of imports from the Allied countries. If this can be done Norway will be able not only to supply her own needs but also to make a considerable contribution to the needs of other countries.

Question B:

The Black Market has made its appearance in all countries affected by the war, but it is obvious that black market sales do the most damage in countries where supplies are inadequate. This is proved by the experience of the countries which have already been liberated.

It is therefore my opinion that the best way to get rid of the black market is to make good the shortage of supplies as quickly as possible. If people can obtain more or less reasonable rations at reasonable prices the conditions under which the black market can thrive will be removed.

Question C:

It is certainly true that in Norway, as in all other occupied countries the Nazis have attempted to influence the minds of the children. I do not, however, think that Norwegian children young people have received any lasting harm from the attempts which have been made to nazify them. On the contrary, all our information goes to prove that young Norwegians have been just as firm in their resistance to those attempts as have the adults.

Of course there are a few children belonging to nazi families, but they are so few that it is quite unlikely that they can form a basis for the continuation of nazism in Norway.

Question D:

The shortage of fuel will certainly create difficulties in Norway in the early period of liberation. We have indeed considerable potential supplies of fuel in our forests. During the occupation, however, the Germans have cut down a large amount of the timber which lies close to the means of communication, and this will create some difficulties at first. But even if we are able to overcome the transport problem we cannot revive our industry with wood fuel alone. For that we need considerable supplies of coal, of which we have none in Norway. Before the war we obtained a proportion of our coal imports from Spitsbergen, but the mines there have been totally destroyed and it will be years before production can be resumed. We shall, therefore, have the difficult problem of obtaining sufficient coal for industry, coastal shipping and railways. In addition, we shall need supplies of petrol, especially for our fishing fleet, which is largely ~~motor~~ motor-driven.

Question E:

I have no illusion about the fact that after the war the Nazis will try to keep their ideas alive in many countries by means of underground activity. That will be especially the case in the countries where nazism is strongest and has been well established for some years. In Norway, however, the nazi ideas have never struck roots amongst our people. The total number of Norwegian Nazis is so insignificant that before the war they were never regarded as constituting a danger to society. They never even managed, for example, to get a single representative elected to our Parliament. It was only the German occupation which gave nazism its chance to rear its head in our public life. The moment that the Germans are driven out of the country, I believe that Nazism and the Nazis will vanish. In any case, I do not believe they will be in a position to conduct underground activity in Norway to any extent which could be dangerous for our future development.