

SUFFERINGS LESS IN EUROPE MOST AFFECTED BY WAR

American Committee Reports Little Suffering Is Found in Regions Devastated by War.

By Paul Scott Mower
Special Cable to The Journal and The Chicago Daily News.
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Paris, France, March 20.—A vivid insight into present conditions in the devastated regions is given by the report of the American committee for devastated France, a preliminary draft of which has just come into my hands. "In those parts of Germany where the difficulties are the greatest," writes ex-President Raymond Poincaré in the last number of the Revue des Deux Mondes, "the sufferings are less than in those parts of our northern and eastern departments which were the least affected." All the evidence seems to bear out the truth of this assertion.

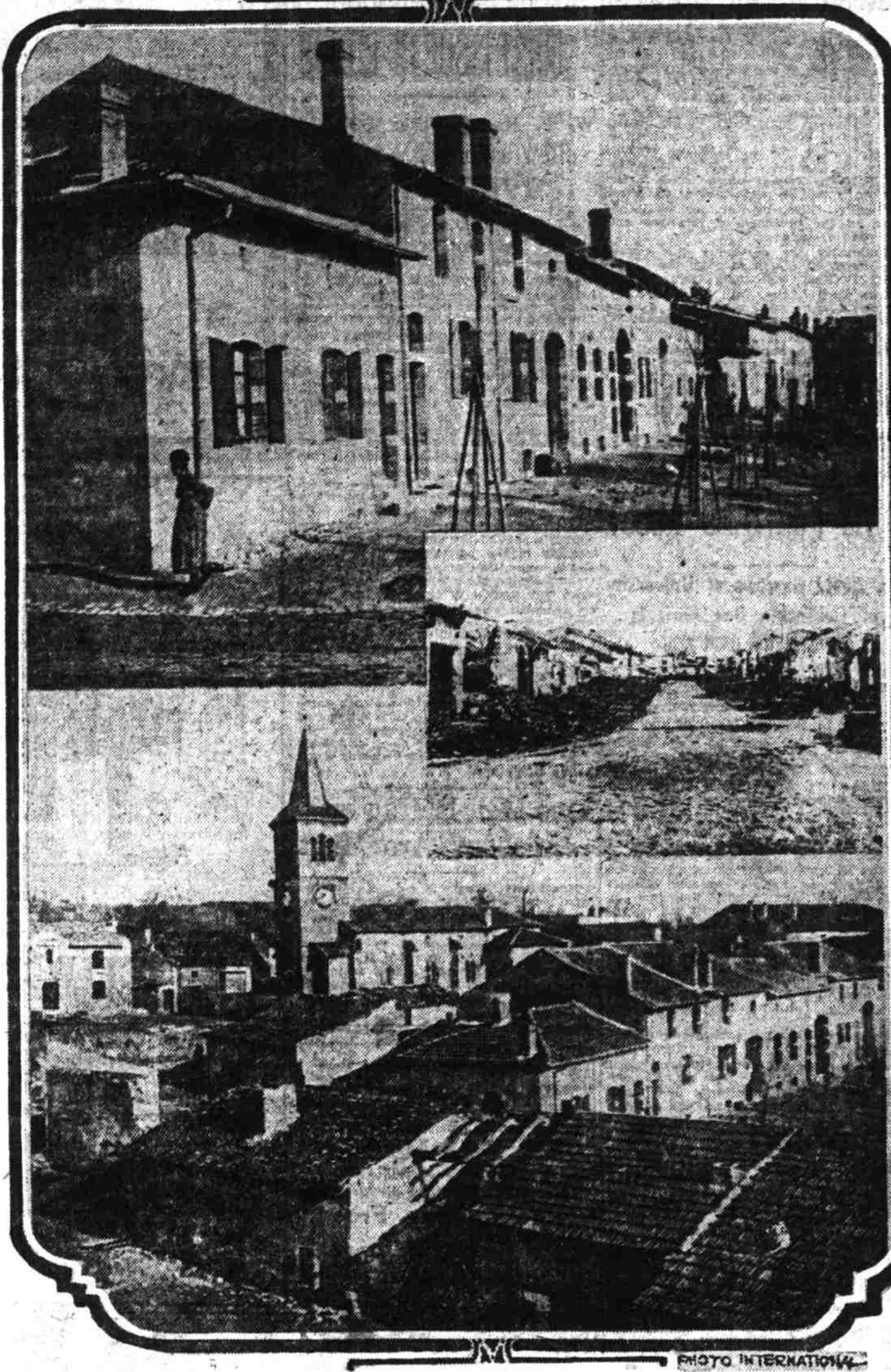
RELIEF PLANNED
Great efforts have been made by the French government and by French private relief organizations. Funds have been advanced and material furnished, but to reconvert a virtual desert into a well tilled, smiling countryside as of yore takes time. The idea of helping Germany to recover from the war before any real international aid has been accorded to the devastated regions seems absolutely unjust to most Frenchmen in whose minds the fact uppermost is that as yet Germany has not paid France a single sou.

Aside from the Red Cross which is merely liquidating the stocks of the Smith college unit, which are small, and the Rockefeller foundation which is interested chiefly in anti-tuberculosis work the American Committee for Devastated France, the president of which is Mrs. A. M. Dike of New York, is the sole active relief organization remaining in France. To its care the French government, just after the armistice, entrusted the task of the reconstruction of four cantons comprising 112 communes, namely: the cantons of Vic-sur-Aisne, Soissons, Coucy-le-Chateau and Anizy-le-Chateau. The total area is 40 square kilometers (25 square miles). The destruction ranges from 50 to 100 per cent. Before the war the population was 59,000; now it is 25,000.

ENORMOUS TASK
In these four cantons which form only a small per cent of the total devastated area probably the most effective relief work has been accomplished which could be found anywhere on the whole 400 kilometers (250 miles) long battle desert stretching from Switzerland to the North sea. Yet even here after a year and a half of steady labor the task which remains is enormous. In the first nine months of 1919 the total expenditure of the committee was 5,472,000 francs (normally \$1,094,400). Of this more than 2,000,000 francs (\$400,000) have been refunded by the inhabitants from their earnings. The committee further possesses motors, tractors, farm machinery, other machinery and merchandise to the value of nearly 2,000,000 francs. The entire enterprise has been conducted with an overhead charge of about 300,000 francs (\$60,000).

But without dwelling on financial details it is interesting to survey briefly the kind of relief which has been afforded to enable the former inhabitants to return and resume their usual life. The first thing which had to be supplied was food. This was exceedingly difficult as no means of transportation existed. Peasants often walked miles for their daily bread. Then for keeping houses in the dugouts or half ruined houses to which the families returned beds, chairs, tables, bedding and dishes had been brought. In December, 1919, the French government passed a law providing furniture at a low cost for the devastated regions and so since that date the American committee in this respect has been merely the keeper of the government warehouse. Clothing, however, has not been provided by the government. The net ex-

FIRST TOWN RECONSTRUCTED IN FRANCE



Vitrimont is the first town in France to be entirely reconstructed by Americans. The new buildings are plain looking, simple in design and built to last. The streets are in process of replanning and trees have already been planted along the walks. This combination illustrates the Vitrimont of war times and the Vitrimont of today. The upper photo shows the principal street as it stands reconstructed by American architects and finance. The insert shows the same thoroughfare during bombardment. The lower picture gives a general view of the town, with clean looking dwellings and church, presenting pleasing appearance.

penditure of the committee on this item, after subtracting refunds, reaches 126,000 francs (\$25,200). For agricultural purposes, seeds, tractors and implements to the value of about 500,000 francs (\$100,000) were purchased and transported by the committee and a series of farm syndicates organized.

"The results achieved by our syndicates," says the committee's report, "have more than fulfilled expectations. Less than a year ago German prisoners were still cleaning shells, grenades and barbed wire from the fields and some tracts of land have not yet been cleared,

nevertheless we already have 2500 acres under cultivation and another 2000 acres ploughed and ready for spring sowing. We have been able to secure and transport 21 carloads of wheat, oats and barley seed and fertilizer."

LIVESTOCK SUPPLIED
Livestock and poultry also have been supplied. For the construction work a series of workshops has been equipped. The government has established building cooperatives throughout the liberated regions and contractors have been asked for bids, but nothing has been accom-

plished by this means as yet because of the lack of men and material and especially transport. The American committee therefore employed 35 masons and carpenters of the region and sent carpenters for wood which had been felled for army purposes. Seventy-five houses and three churches have been repaired, 450 school benches made and eight barracks reconstructed. The stone quarries on the Aisne are just beginning to be worked for building material. "On the Hindenburg line," says the report, "the Germans by nearly five years of constant shelling succeeded in literally pulverizing the villages and naturally it is impossible for France to rebuild in a day what it took five years of constant cannonading to destroy."

Much child welfare work has been conducted by the committee with the co-operation of the government. Sixty-five public schools and four domestic science schools have been equipped in these four cantons.

PLANS CRITICISED
Many criticisms have been made by American visitors against French methods of reconstruction, but it should be remembered that although the devastated regions would be a sufficient problem for any one nation at the close of an exhausting war France has many other problems equally important for the nation's future which must also be solved. Such Americans as have actually worked in the devastated departments speak of the fine fortitude and energy displayed by the inhabitants under the most discouraging circumstances. The sentiment throughout France is that if international help is to be given anyone it should be given here where the brunt of the war was borne and where the soldiers of France, Britain and America sacrificed their lives together.

Bolsheviki to War On Poland Unless Attacks Are Halted

By Hal O'Flaherty
Special Cable to The Journal and The Chicago Daily News.
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Stockholm, Sweden, March 20.—A message from M. Tchitcherine, Russian commissioner of foreign affairs, addressed to the British, French and American legations in Stockholm, contains a threat immediately to begin an offensive against Poland unless the authorities in that country consent to enter into peace negotiations. The commissar reviews the soviet government's long continued efforts to bring peace between Russia and the neighboring republics, but points out that recently the Poles have been fighting desperately, capturing many towns, and that they are continuing to attack the Bolsheviki troops.

Commissar Tchitcherine declares that unless this is immediately ended, the soviet of Russia and Ukraine cannot be held responsible for the consequences. He points out the impossibility of proceeding with arranging economic relations with Poland while the Poles are attacking, and offers to begin peace negotiations on the same terms as has been offered heretofore.

TREATY IS BLAMED IN SLOW WORK OF REBUILDING EUROPE

Economic Reconstruction Is the Tremendous Problem That Must Be Solved—Hjalmar Branting.

By Hjalmar Branting
Swedish Socialist Leader.
(Written for the United Press.)
Christiania, March 20.—The failure of the treaty of Versailles to include a real plan for the economic rebuilding of Europe after the world war has aggravated the general situation greatly.

It is already fully evident that France and Belgium, probably Italy and certainly the Slav states in the Balkans and the east are depending on the possibility of renewed industry for their reestablishment.

Economic reconstruction is the tremendous problem confronting Europe. In comparison with it the disposition of the "deserter of Amerongen" (the former kaiser) really is of very little importance.

This reconstruction should be regarded, in part at least, from the viewpoint

Bankers Become Too Rich Giddy Money Battle Waged

By Edgar Ansel Mower
Special Cable to The Journal and The Chicago Daily News.
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Rome, Italy, March 20.—A giddy battle between capitalists rivaling those in the best days of "frenzied finance" in America is related by the Rome Epoca in explanation of the rise of the stock of the Banca Commerciale. The shares which have a face value of 500 lire (normally \$100) each have risen in four days from 1,250 lire (\$250) to almost 2,000 lire (\$400) per share. According to the newspaper a controlling interest in the 50,000 shares in the Banca Commerciale has been held by a number of financiers known as the Marsaglia group, perhaps the strongest in Italy.

FIGHT FOR CONTROL
But the war created other fortunes. The Perrone brothers, virtual owners of the immense Ansaldo steel interests, two years ago obtained a share in the Banca Italiana Disconto and some 50,000 shares of the Banca Commerciale. Gradually the Perrone brothers, who with their wives have an estimated combined fortune of 700,000,000 lire (normally \$140,000,000) bought more Commerciale stock

and finally forced the Marsaglia group into terms of alliance. Recently when a new president and vice presidents were to be elected, the Perrones became discontented, broke the alliance and entered the field in open warfare to obtain complete control of the shares. The Perrones had the start in the race and had bought a large number of shares before the Marsaglia group knew what was going on. Then Marsaglia in self defense began buying desperately with the result that the price of the stock has risen to a fantastic height.

ASK GOVERNMENT AID
The Epoca and other newspapers invoke government interference if the Perrones gain control of the Banca Commerciale they will control financial resources of not less than 4,500,000 lire (normally \$900,000,000), which for Italy is a tremendous sum. It may be recalled that before the war the Banca Commerciale was the chief means of promoting German commercial penetration in Italy and hence despite its reported nationalization during the war it is still an object of considerable suspicion.

origin of the world war. They must be made to change their views radically upon this fundamental question. This will be difficult because of the long and systematic campaign of falsity to which the German people were subjected. Defeat and revolution have not caused the change to take place, but it

Ukrainian Soviet Is Seeking Peace With Polish Government

By Michael Farban
Special Cable to The Journal and The Chicago Daily News.

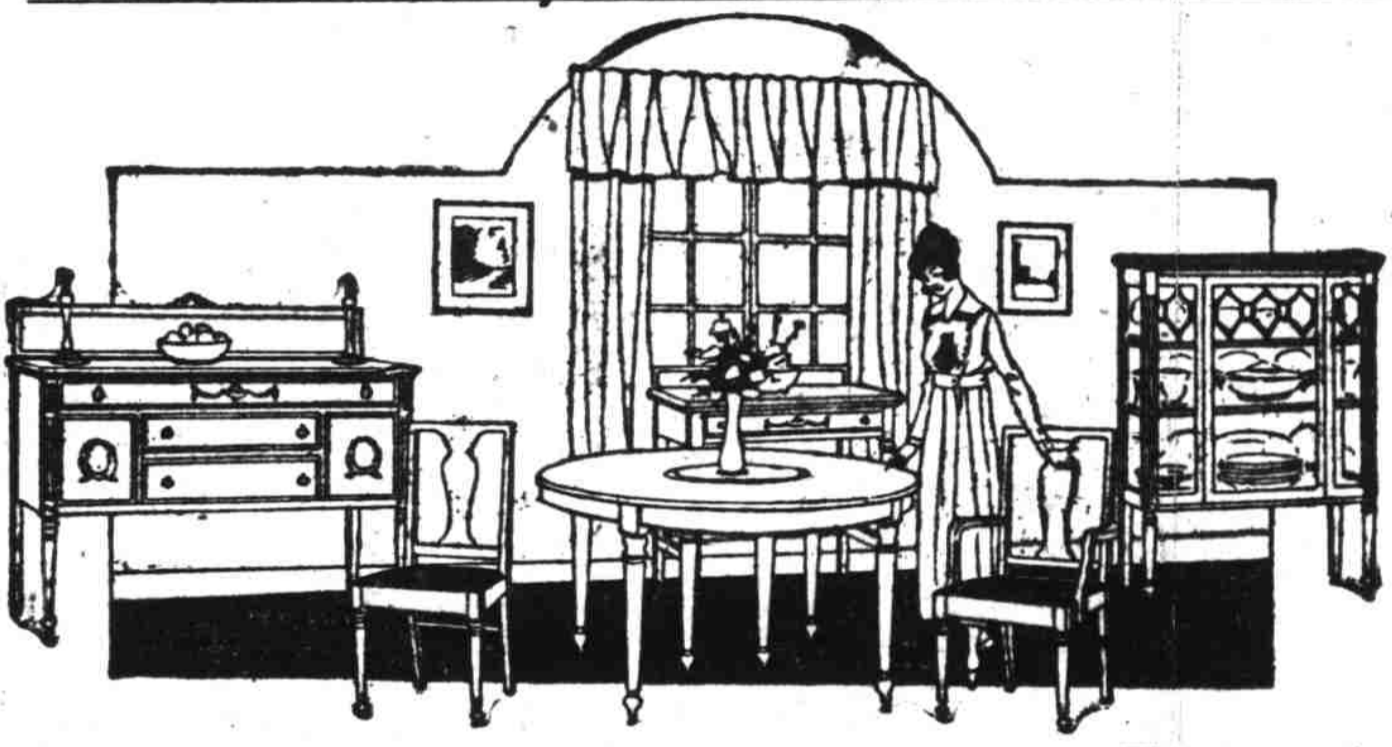
Moscow, Russia, March 20.—(Via Riga, Livonia, March 17.)—On February 24 the Ukrainian soviet government offered peace to the Polish government. A note was sent by wireless stating that the workers and peasants' government of the Ukrainian soviet republic had tried to overturn the government which pretended to rule Ukraine, such as that of Hetman Skoropadsky, the German force of occupation and recently the directory. The present abnormal relations between Ukraine and Poland, the note continued, prevented commercial relations and added to the nationalist dissensions which had been created artificially by the enemies of both states and which could only be overcome by peace. Any further advance of the Polish troops will be met with an armed insurrection, as it will be looked upon as a move from "imperialistic Central Europe" to the entente powers.

The workers' and peasants' government believes that the difference in the form of government between Poland and Ukraine is no obstacle to peace. The proposed frontiers will be those upon which the Russo-Ukrainian Red army was halted in the pursuit of the White bands and Petliurists and which was outlined in the peace proposals made by the allied soviet republic of Russia.

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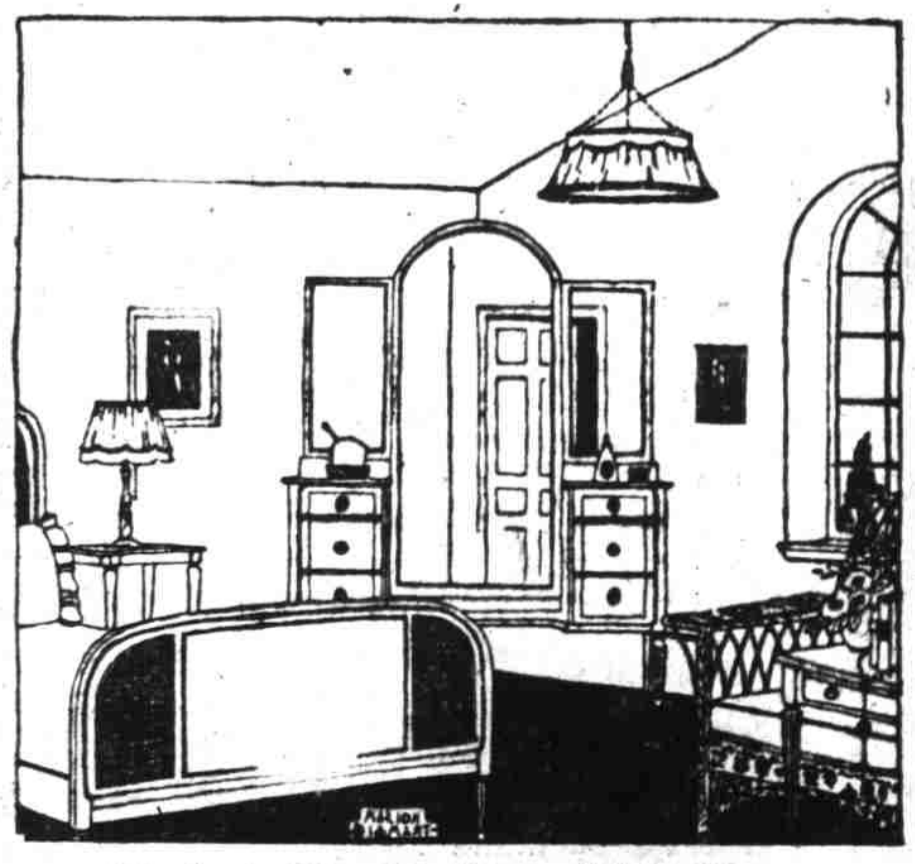
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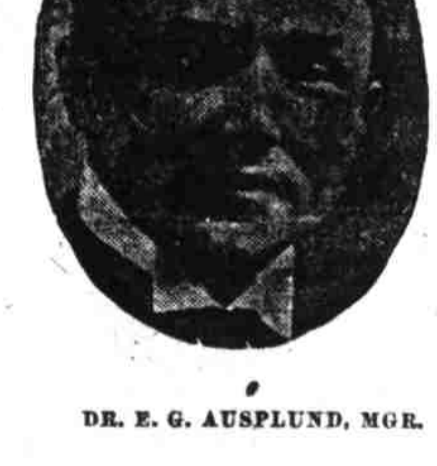
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