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Editorially

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WAR is certainly a disagreeable occurrence to have happen so frequently. Every generation in American history has been involved in war, and each in turn has been taught its lesson regarding lack of satisfaction from war. Even so, we hear of advancements brought about by wartime necessity.

In this war, veterinarians who are sent to foreign service are being awakened to a realization that animal health is not maintained at a respectable level in many parts of the world. Countries of the Middle East especially show evidence of lack of veterinary service. Not only are veterinarians unavailable, but also the ability to pay for professional service is lacking. As a consequence, there remains a reservoir of infection, a potential menace to the health of livestock throughout the world.

But, one may ask, what has a foreign problem to do with domestic animal health? Is there any reason why we should give attention to a predicament which is apparently so remote from our own? The answer cannot be definite, but modern advancement in transportation has an uncanny way of making the remote near at hand. In the past, highly resistant infective agents such as the virus of foot and mouth disease have been transported in packing hay and cured hides. Reduction of transportation time from the Orient from a matter of weeks to a few days will introduce the possibility of less resistant infective agents such as the virus of rinderpest being carried to new areas. To introduce additional animal diseases to the complex which is currently present in this country would be a blunder not easily reconciled.

Quarantine and embargo can do much toward preventing the spread of infection between nations, but such measures will never reach maximum efficiency unless the amount of infection in an existing area is low enough to aid in reducing the mathematical chance for its spread. Furthermore, these methods of limiting disease are prone to cause a certain degree of ill feeling and international distrust. The important task is to get at the basis of the problem rather than sit idly by, or make laws setting up imperfect barriers in an attempt to keep a disease localized.

If it is true what has been rumored about the Army's part in postwar rehabilitation in many foreign countries, an appropriation of a good deal of effort on the part of the Veterinary Corps toward foreign animal disease control would be in order. This would be an insurance of our own standing as well as being a cosmopolitan venture. The work should be coordinated and supplemented with support from the affected countries. Educational facilities could be expanded there until the training of qualified men was accomplished. Our part in such an undertaking would recede until it would merely be a part of an international organization furthering the cause of veterinary medicine.—R. E. N.

OUR COVER illustrates drawing blood for brucellosis testing from a portion of a large California dairy herd.