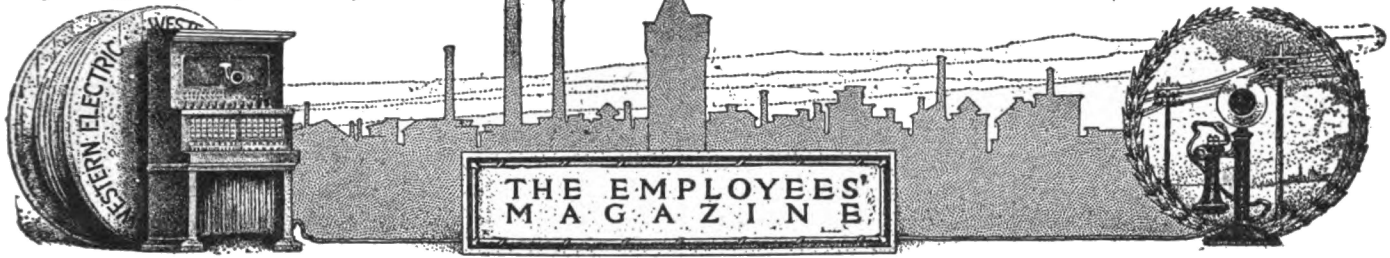


Western Electric News



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At Antwerp Again

We Walk In as the Germans Run Out

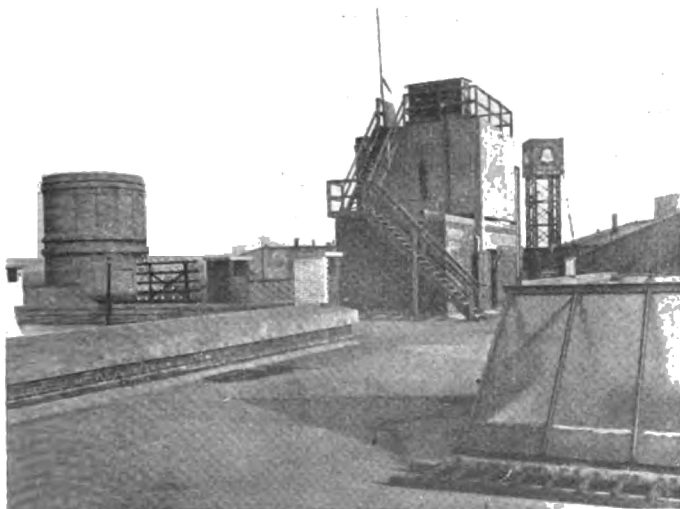
AN integral part of the German scheme of world domination was the crippling of industry in the region overrun by the Teutonic invaders. Despite the subjugation of the German military forces, the systematic pillaging of factories in Belgium and Northern France, has created a situation that may enable the Germans, even in the midst of military defeat, to gain in the field of peaceful industry a considerable advantage over their victorious opponents.

Just how great this danger is, still remains a subject for speculation, even among experts, but the story of the reconstruction of our allied house in Antwerp shows that it is possible to balk the German scheme just at the point where it seems to have its last chance of success.

As many of the readers of the *News* will remember, the Antwerp house was the first of the Company's factories in Europe, and from its establishment, in 1882, to

the capture of Antwerp by the Germans in the fall of 1914, played a leading rôle in the development of the Company's European business. It had increased from a small building to a considerable group, and the telephones, switchboards and other electrical apparatus made there could be found in all parts of the world. It might almost have been termed the backbone of the Western Electric Company's international interests.

The city of Antwerp was occupied by the German army on October 9, 1914, after a bombardment which had demonstrated the fallacy of the theory that the forts in the outskirts could protect the city indefinitely. In company with a large proportion of the population, those in charge of the Antwerp house made their way to Holland, but five days later, when conditions had become more settled, C. C. Clayton and A. D. Whipple, both Americans, returned to Antwerp. Although there



Teutonic Alterations in the Skyline at Antwerp. The Photograph on the Left Shows a Sort of Watchtower Built on the Roof of the Factory by the Germans. The Same Roof as it Used to Look May Be Seen in the Left Background of the Photograph on the Right

was nothing in the line of their own duties to compel them to do so, they took charge of the factory, and remained there for nearly three years, when the entrance of America into the war made it necessary for them to leave. Their story was told in the December, 1917, issue of the *News*, and there is no need to repeat it now, but they were unable at that time to tell certain things which may now be revealed.

One of these hitherto unrevealed things helped, in a measure, to pave the way for the reconstruction of the Antwerp factory. Back in 1915, when the *Lusitania* was sunk, the entrance of the United States into the war seemed likely to those in Antwerp, and Mr. Clayton decided that it would be an excellent plan to conceal the records and other valuable papers from the Germans. He and Mr. Brodahl, the factory engineer, who since has died, went through the files in the offices of Messrs. Minor, Christoffel, Wright and Delville, the men who had been in active charge of affairs, and removed everything that might be of profit to the Germans. These papers were carried across the street to a room in one of the older buildings, where experimental work had been in progress. This room had always been kept locked, so it was possible to work with less fear of detection.

Seven or eight zinc boxes, about three feet long, eighteen inches wide, and fifteen inches deep, were then filled with the papers, and various other articles of value, among them ten pounds of platinum and some silver coins that the Company had been experimenting with in order to make coins for the Belgian government. The dies

from which the coins were to be made, and which belonged to the Belgian government, also were put in the boxes. It took all one Sunday to pack the boxes, which then were made air-tight.

On the following Sunday a section of the floor was carefully removed, a deep hole dug, and the boxes were buried. The earth was concealed and the section of floor relaid in such fashion that it was practically impossible to tell that it ever had been removed. This part of the job was done so successfully that when, a week or two later, Mr. Clayton brought Mr. Whipple over, the latter was unable to find the place where the floor had been taken up, although he was told that it was somewhere in the room in which he was standing. Mr. Clayton prepared two maps, which he succeeded in getting out of Belgium with him, so that even if something happened to him, it still would be possible to find the buried treasure.

It sounds more like a romance than business, but, after all, it was just an example of Western Electric resourcefulness, coupled with the loyalty which seems to be a part of the makeup of Western Electric men wherever they are found.

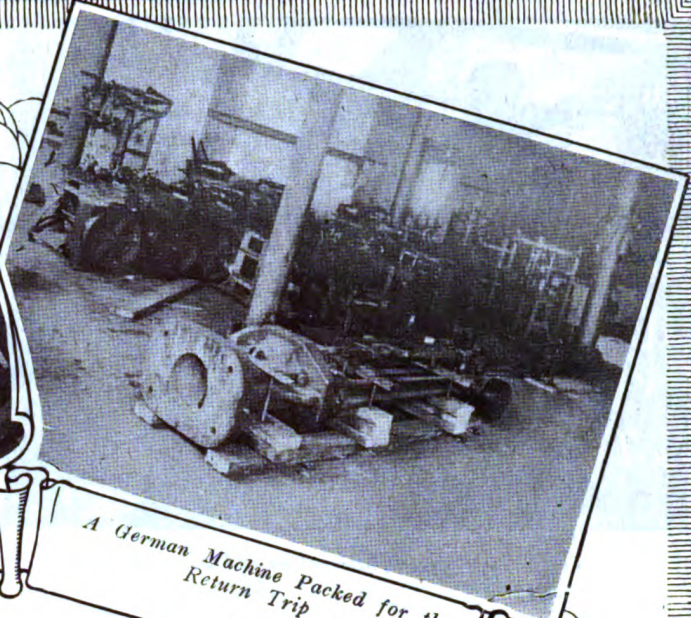
Even before Messrs. Clayton and Brodahl buried the records, they took the first step in another phase of the reconstruction process. Anticipating what later proved to be a fact—that the Germans would carry off most of the machinery—they drew up a list of all the machinery in the Antwerp factory, and smuggled it out of Belgium. This list was in six sections, written on ex-



In the Rear of the Wooden Partition on the Right is the Place Where Messrs. Clayton and Brodahl Buried the Records, Platinum, Etc.



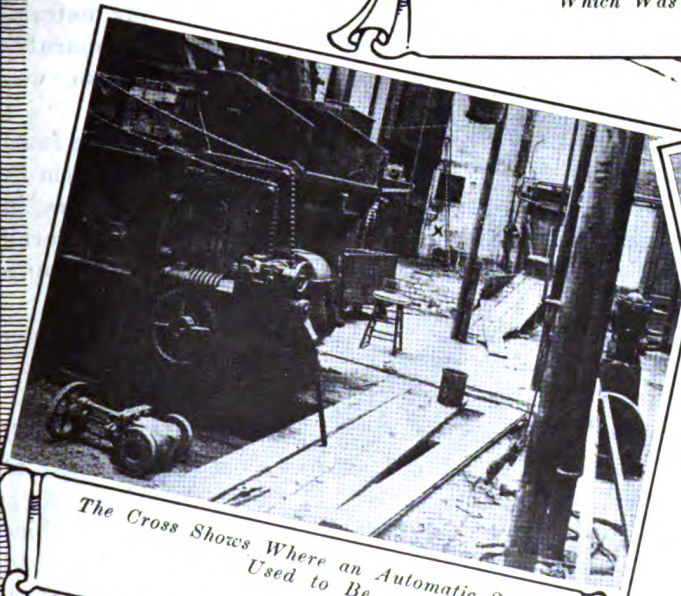
A Little Heap of Furniture and Records
Piled Up by the Invaders



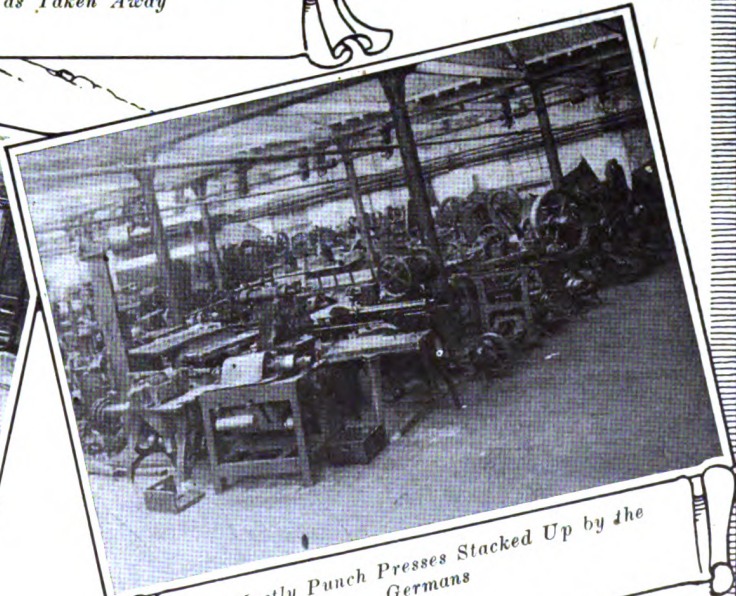
A German Machine Packed for the
Return Trip



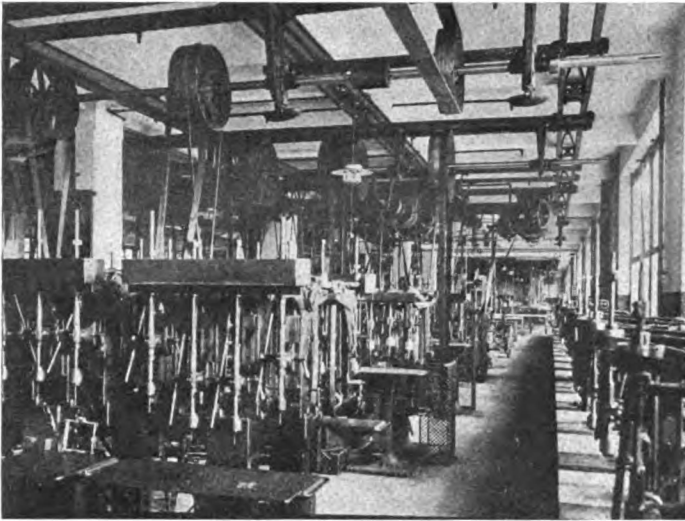
Concrete Foundations of the Big Turbine
Which Was Taken Away



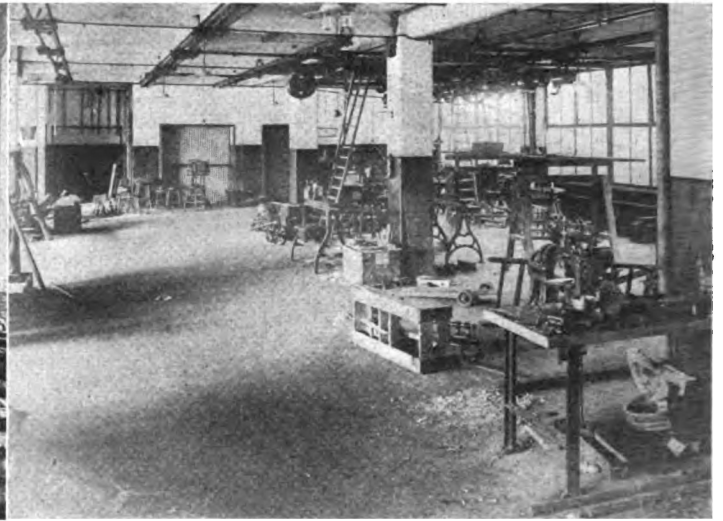
The Cross Shows Where an Automatic Stoker
Used to Be



Mostly Punch Presses Stacked Up by the
Germans



The Drill Press Department as it Used to Look



As it Looked When the Huns Left

tremely thin paper, that could be folded into an almost infinitesimal compass. These lists were sent to America, where it was found that most of the needed equipment could be replaced from Hawthorne's surplus stock, and arrangements were made long ago to ship the machinery as soon as it was discovered how much would be required.

All this, of course, went on while the war was still in progress, and the Germans were taking machinery from almost every factory in Belgium and Northern France, and transporting it to Germany.

The story of what was found in Antwerp when the war ended still is incomplete, and in a measure fragmentary. The photographs which accompany this article tell much more than mere words can. It was not until Nov. 22 that Mr. Christoffel, manager of the Hague office, succeeded in obtaining permission to go to Antwerp, where he stayed for the best part of a week. About the same time Mr. Van de Wege, who had been in the Belgian army, and who is the son of Hippolyte, the doorman or concierge at Antwerp, was allowed to go home from Paris on a ten days' leave and brought back with him the photographs which are here reproduced. They were taken immediately after the Germans had left. His enterprise in obtaining them is only another example of how the Western Electric spirit works. From the reports made by Messrs. Christoffel and Van de Wege, the following account of the condition of the Antwerp house has been pieced together.

For the last three months of the war the factory was in active use by the Germans for the purpose of repairing field telephones and work of a kindred character. They called it the Nachrichtenwerkstatt, a typically Teutonic word which is almost untranslatable. Not all of the buildings were so used, however, and the idle portions were filled with furniture and some of the machinery removed from the rooms the Germans occupied.

The phrase, "some of the machinery," is used advisedly, because the Germans carried off most of it to Germany. The new turbine unit installed not long before the war began was ripped from its concrete base. The remainder of the old power plant is still in place, how-

ever. It consists of two vertical compound engines, with Western Electric generators and one horizontal engine. Three of the four boilers are in good condition, except that the automatic stoker on one of the boilers is among the missing. There was precious little machinery of value to the Germans overlooked by them. All stock of raw material, including lumber, has disappeared.

Now for what is left. The buildings themselves are in even better condition than was anticipated. Practically all of the electric light wiring is intact. The records, platinum and tools buried by Messrs. Clayton and Brodahl were found undisturbed and unharmed by their sojourn of three years underground.

The haste with which the Germans left caused a sort of involuntary exchange of machinery, because much of that which they had brought from Germany and installed for their Signal Corps repair work, was left behind. Some of it was all packed and crated, ready for its journey home. Considerable stocks of war material, such as field cables, portable sets, magneto apparatus, switchboards, batteries, condensers, etc., also were abandoned.

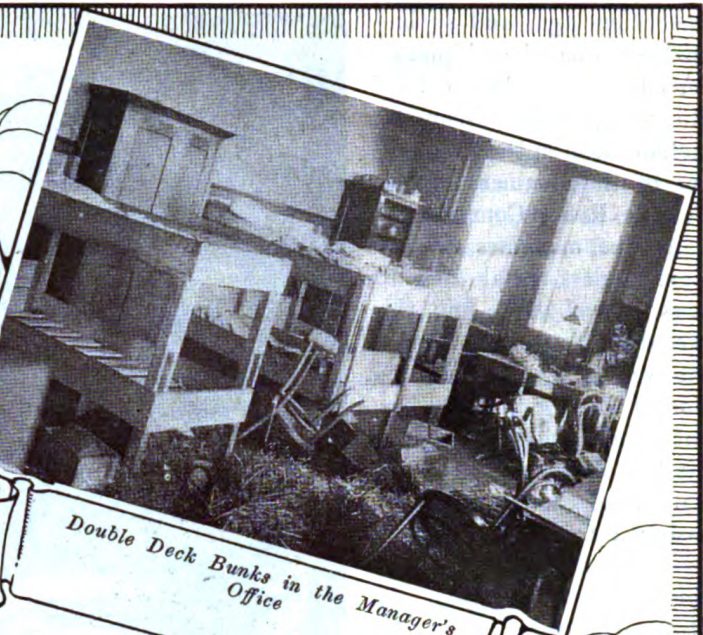
Part of the disorder in which the buildings were found was due to the fact that the Germans had used them for sleeping quarters. Nearly all of the private offices, including that of the manager, were turned into dormitories, and in some cases bunks were built one on top of the other.

The unwelcome visitors made themselves right at home in every sense of the word.

Now for the future. How long is it going to take to prove to the Germans that their attempt to cripple the business for years to come was as useless as their attempt to whip the world? It takes two things to run an establishment like the Antwerp factory—machines and men. The survey of the machinery situation, made while the war was still raging, already has been mentioned, so it is almost superfluous to add that even now the machines are on their way to Antwerp. By the time this issue of the News reaches its readers some of them probably will be installed. Ten carloads left Hawthorne



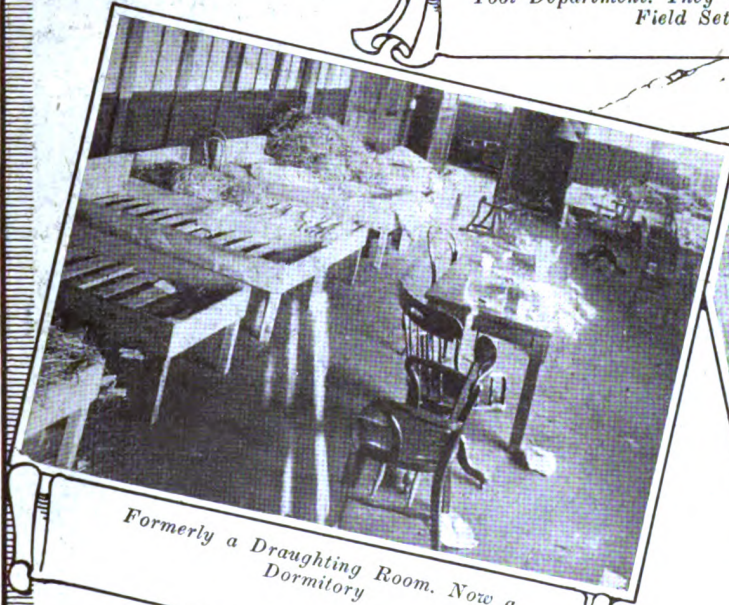
A Row of German Carpenters' Benches
Set Up in the Factory



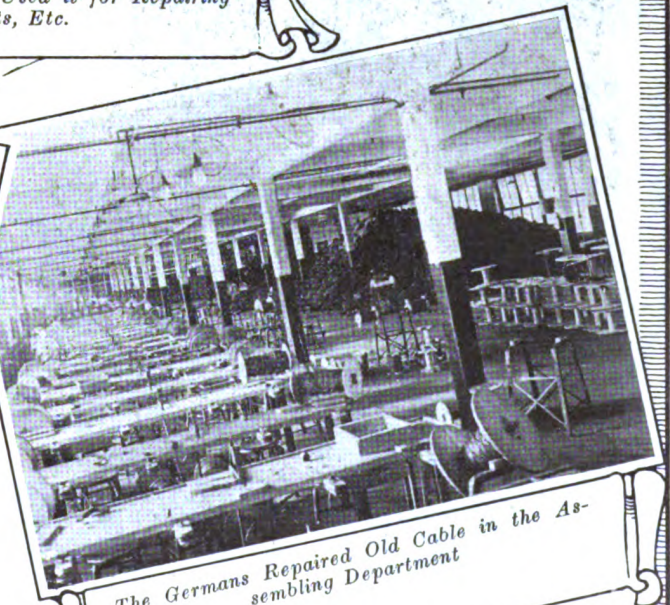
Double Deck Bunks in the Manager's
Office



A Shop Installed by the Germans in the Old
Tool Department. They Used it for Repairing
Field Sets, Etc.



Formerly a Draughting Room. Now a
Dormitory

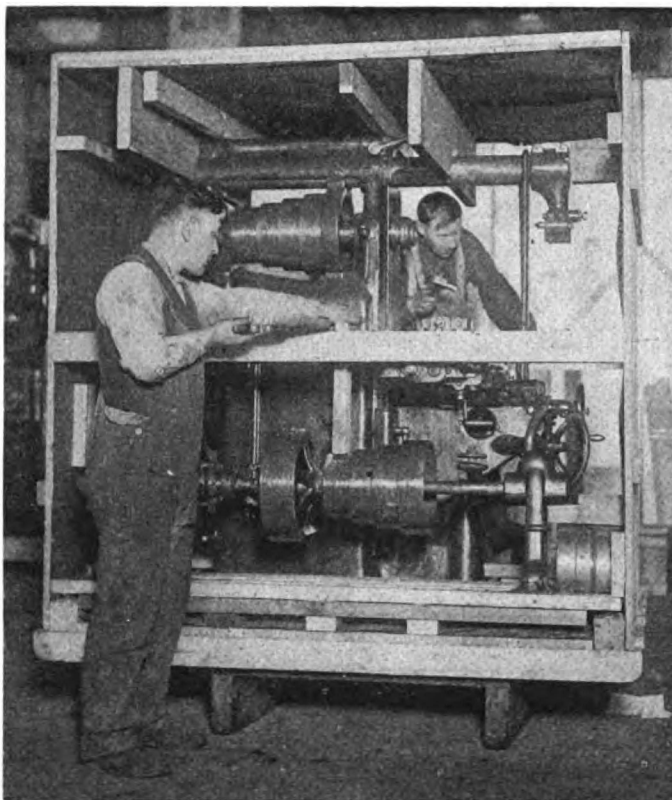


The Germans Repaired Old Cable in the As-
sembling Department

some time ago, and so important was the shipment considered that Herbert C. Hoover gave permission to include them in the cargo of one of the steamers of the Belgian Relief Commission.

As the machines are so much useless metal without men to run them, and the executive forces to direct the work, the reconstruction of the organization has not been overlooked. After the fall of Antwerp, the executives of the factory were assigned to other posts in the Company's organization. Some stayed in Holland, others went to Paris and London, and a fair-sized delegation came to the United States. Now most of them are hurrying back from Hawthorne and New York, from London and Paris. It is reunion time in Antwerp now.

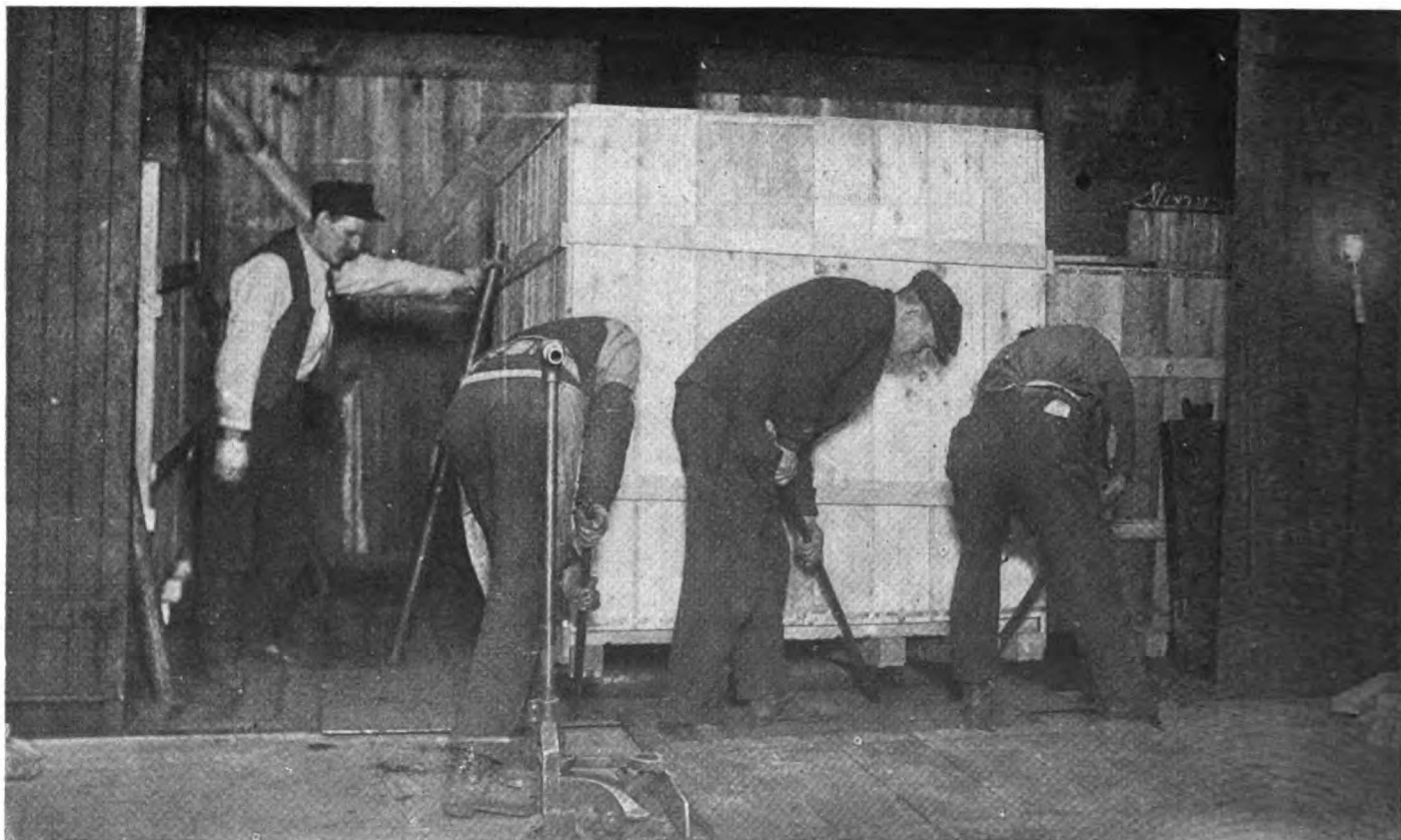
Of course, a big proportion of the Belgians employed went at once into the Belgian army, and many of that gallant body of fighters never will return. The Belgian government is doing all that it can to accelerate the re-



habilitation of industry by releasing at an early date the "keymen," as they are called—men such as foremen, who are essential to the industries in which they were engaged before the outbreak of hostilities. The other workmen also are coming back as fast as they are discharged from the army, and it is estimated that approximately 60 per cent. of the former employees will return. There were about 2,300 of them in the old days.

Within six months, the Antwerp factory will be running on a considerable scale is the prophecy made at this time by the Company's executives. Some of the copies of this issue of the News will be sent to the Western Electric men in

the American Army of Occupation, now on German soil, and these soldiers have full permission to show them to any and all Germans who may still be afflicted with the idea that the industries of the invaded regions are down and out for years to come. The pillage system is a rank failure.



The Photographs on This Page Show a Machinery Shipment Leaving Hawthorne for Antwerp