

HOW BUDAPEST SOLVED THE BREAD PROBLEM

By a Staff Correspondent

(Odon Por)

IN Budapest, the capital city of Hungary, the bread problem has during recent years been a source of growing discontent on the part of the people, and a problem challenging the serious attention of earnest-minded leaders.

The bill of popular grievances included the wholesale adulteration of bread by the employment of so much potato and water as materially to impair its nutritive value. Thus, for example, as has been pointed out by Mr. Odon Por, the department of chemistry for the city of Budapest found at a trial baking that one pound of flour could be easily mixed with two hundred per cent of water and

potato, without the lay consumer realizing the poor quality of the bread.

Another charge made against those in control of the baking business was that, going hand in hand with the deterioration in food value of the bread was the steady increase in its price; while the dirty and unsanitary condition of many bakeries furnishing bread to the poorer sections of the city menaced the health of the people. It was charged that owing to the civilization-wide mania for money, the people were being forced to consume poor, dear and dirty bread or bread lacking in proper food value, for which a charge was being made out of all propor-



BUDAPEST'S MUNICIPAL BAKERY

tion to the general increase in the cost of living, and that the bakeries were far beneath the sanitary standard demanded by present civilization—that many of them were dark, filthy and thoroughly unsanitary. The official supervision was unsatisfactory, as is usually the case where public servants attempt to regulate a private monopoly, and a general clamor rose for a municipal bakery.

Six years ago the press and social reformers inaugurated a vigorous campaign, which resulted in the city establishing a modern municipal bakery, which has now been in successful operation over a year. Recently two trained investigators have visited this interesting municipal innovation and reported the results of their investigations at length, the most thorough and detailed description having been prepared by Adolph Smith, the eminent health expert, for the London *Lancet*. The other investigation was conducted by the able and careful student

of economic progress, Mr. Odon Por, for *Wilshire's Magazine*. Both writers agree with the citizens of Budapest, that the municipal bakery has been an unqualified success and that the city is amply justified in its determination to greatly enlarge the present plant.

Mr. Smith, in *The Lancet*, describes the bakery as situated on the outskirts of the city, surrounded by vacant land. It is a building of architectural pretensions, with splendid high, well-ventilated halls, which contrast strikingly with the dark and often dirty cellars of the private bakeries. Here the latest and best machinery has been installed and every possible effort has been made to make the bread by machinery under the most cleanly and sanitary conditions.

"Instead," says Mr. Smith, "of half-naked men, toiling and sweating as they plunge their arms into the dough, here is magnificent kneading machinery."

Nor is this all. Every employé each

morning on entering the building has to go to a large room where he removes his clothing, which is placed in a locker. He then proceeds to the bath halls, which are fitted with hot and cold water, shower baths, bath-tubs and a plunge. After the bath the employé is supplied with pure white, clean clothing, from the municipal bakery. Not until he is thus bathed and clad is he permitted to engage in his day's work; and such provisions as this mark the entire operation of this modern bakery.

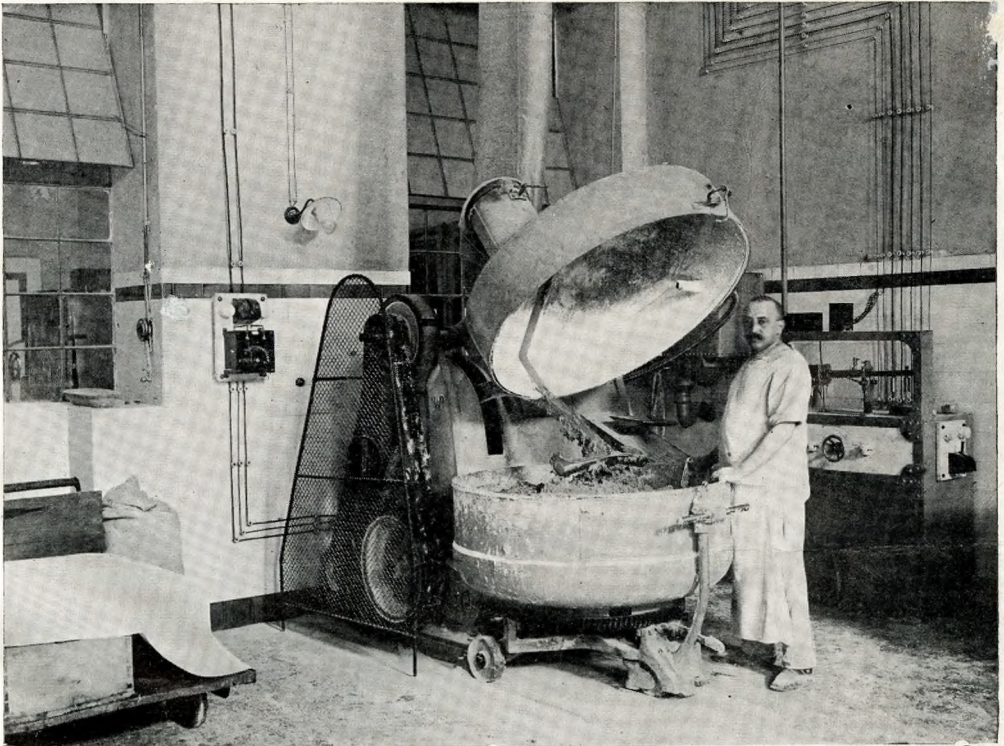
The interior walls are all painted a light tint, so that any dirt can be immediately seen, and they, like all other parts of the factory, are kept scrupulously clean.

When baked, the bread is placed in specially constructed wagons for transportation to the city. The carts are filled with slides for bread trays, and the sides are canvas, to protect the bread from dust while allowing the air to pass through. Mr. Smith closes his detailed description

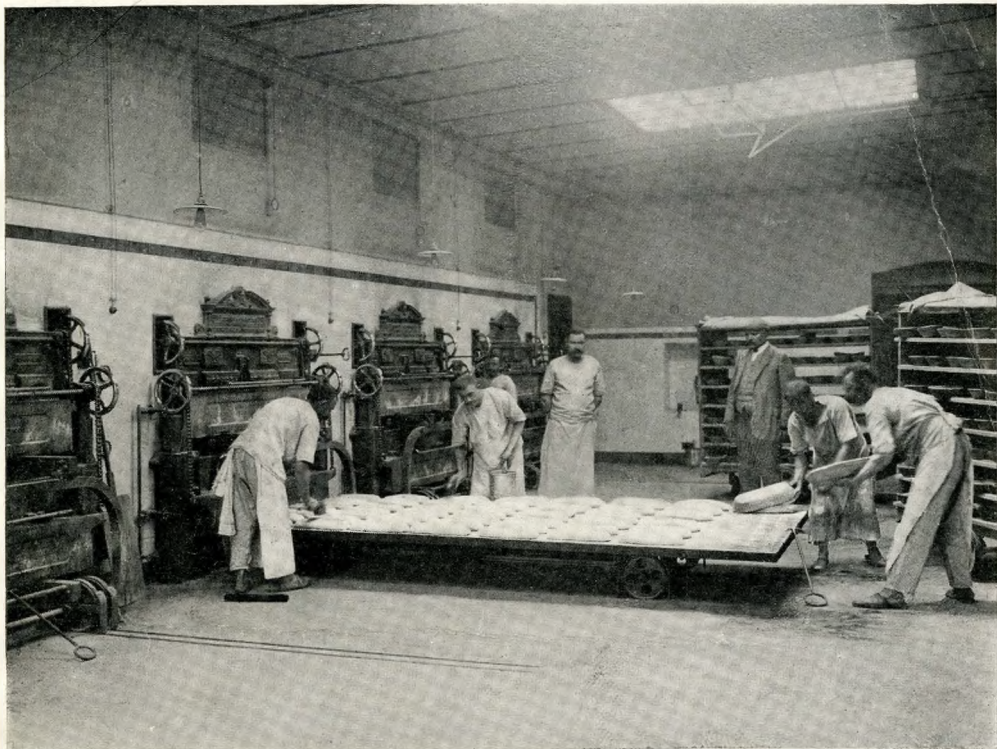
with these words: "Thus it will be seen that every care is taken that the bread shall be pure, clean and nutritious."

The city realized at the outset that, owing to the fact that so many of the citizens were earning a very meagre wage, it would be necessary that the bread be cheap as well as clean, pure and nutritious, and it does not seek profit from the bakery, which must merely pay its expenses, furnish money to pay interest on the fund borrowed and set aside sufficient in a sinking fund to pay the principal within fifty years. After doing this it was found that the city could make and market the bread at a cent a two-pound loaf less than the prevailing price for the inferior and innutritious article. This reduction in price forced the private makers also to reduce their price. After the plant has been paid for it will, of course, be possible to further greatly reduce the price of bread.

The present product of the factory is



KNEADING MACHINE

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about one hundred thousand pounds a day, but the city has taken steps to increase the capacity of the bakery so that it will be able to make eight hundred thousand pounds a day.

That the example of Budapest will be extensively followed by other municipalities is highly probable, because the spirit of greed has so permeated the present commercial age that there is everywhere

a growing tendency, not only to establish monopolies in life's necessities, but to place the acquisition of money above considerations of cleanliness, health and fair profit; while more and more the people are coming to feel that it is the part of wise statesmanship and good business to substitute public monopolies for public interest and well-being in place of private monopolies for private gain