

BUY
THE
LARGE
ECONOMY
TUBE



Help yourself to Loveliness

TRY
THE
NEW

WITH
LUSTER-FOAM
(C₁₂H₂₂O₅SNa)

You'll marvel at the thrilling new way the NEW Listerine Tooth Paste, charged with "Luster-Foam" detergent, adds sparkling beauty to your smile... gets after dull, dingy tooth film, and helps replace it with glamorous lustre and polish.



Distinguished by the
NEW BLUE CARTON
—Buy a Tube To-day

The Bicycle that
looks Perfect
is Perfect and
STAYS Perfect

BSA



THE SAD STORY OF AMERICAN RUBBER

(Written for "The Listener" by A.M.R.)

No rubber will be available for civilian use for at least three years. This view is expressed in a formal report presented to the Senate by Senator Truman's investigating committee on the rubber position. The report declares that there has been gross maladministration of the rubber situation, resulting in a most serious outlook, and points out that relief can be anticipated only from synthetic rubber.—Cable from Washington, May 27.

The Secretary of the Department of Commerce, Mr. Jones, revealed that the Government has undertaken a programme designed to reclaim 85,000 tons of rubber yearly from the nation's million-ton scrap heap.—Cable from Washington, May 28.

WHAT makes the situation revealed above so painful is the fact that rubber is a 100 per cent. exclusive American product, of which, as late as 32 years ago, not one single milky drop had ever been produced elsewhere. Columbus first of Europeans saw it, and wrote home his amazement at seeing Indians playing with "live stones." But the only employment that Europe found for it through three centuries appears in its English name of "rubber" ("India-rubber" because from Brazil). Then in 1834, one Thomas Hancock, by inventing the vulcanizing process, increased a hundredfold its uses, its demand, and its cost. "Such price would not be were the caouchaou plant grown by ourselves in the East," commented Hancock, and by that remark, as much as by his invention, he made himself the father of all the world's enormous and multifarious rubber industries—and responsible for the Allies' present plight.

For rubber was not then a cultivated crop. It was obtained by tapping forest trees, called Hevea, grey of trunk and shiny of green leaf, that grow wild and always far apart in the Amazon jungles. And the Brazilian Rubber Barons (as a recent cable called their much come-down-in-the-world-successors) who grubstaked the half-breed *seringueiros* who prospected and "bled" it, had sworn blood-curdling penalties upon anyone who should attempt to increase the supply by planting at home or selling seeds abroad. But Empire-building piracy had not ended with Drake. In 1873 Sir Joseph Hooker, Director of Kew Gardens, was offered two thousand Hevea seeds by a mysterious "Mr. Farris" and snapped them up without asking any but strictly horticultural questions. However, only twelve germinated! And of these, the six sent to Calcutta—the practical test—all failed to thrive. Brazilian rubber, the world's only rubber, therefore continued mounting in price until what cost a few pence to gather was selling for 13/- a pound. In the one year, 1910, America's infant automobile industry built a "million dollar" opera house in the little Amazon town of Manaus (Para) and spangled its multi-coloured inhabitants with two million pounds' worth of jewellery.



HENRY FORD
May last longer as a farmer

Then came the end of America's monopoly. For in that year, 1910, cultivated plantation Asiatic rubber first came on the market. Kew had tried again, emptying out every hothouse to attempt a few "takes" at least among 70,000 seeds. Within a fortnight its healthiest successes were off to found the Ceylon rubber plantations—Britain's principal remaining source to-day. Soon Malaya had 3,000,000 acres. World production leaped from 11,000 tons in 1910, to 317,000 in 1920, to 567,000 in 1927. Yet profits, too, kept pace—thanks mainly on the demand side to Mr. Ford and his competitors, and on the supply side to the British price-fixing "Stevenson Plan."

Then the planters' serried ranks wavered and broke at the onrush of the Great Depression. Unrestrained competition on the heels of unrestrained planting brought rubber to the ground—literally. In 1933 the writer of this article walked across Raffles Square, Singapore, experimentally paved in part with Best Product of Malaya at 1 3/4d a pound. In twenty years rubber had passed from being an American monopoly in short supply into being an East Indian monopoly in enormous supply—and just under the Japanese military paw.

Ford Steps In

However, 1933 and Singapore also witnessed, all unwittingly, the first stroke in the return match that was to restore large scale rubber production, and with it the prospects of victory back to the Americas. The Rubber Cartel, reorganising itself out of its ruins on a British-Dutch-Asia-wide basis, indulgently let members sell seeds to a mad American botanist. They could all the more safely do so (they felt) since Dr. Weir was

(Continued on next page)