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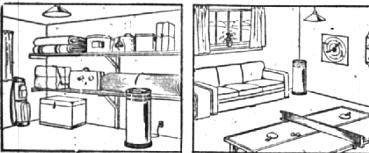
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Easy Life for Dutch Windmill Operator

By ROBERT BALL
Special Correspondent for The Eccentric

KOUDEKERK, The Netherlands—The Marshall Plan efficiency advisers have Mrs. Cornelius Kraan worried. Not that she's against progress as such, but she hopes progress will leave windmills alone.

This is understandable. A changeover to electric pumps would deprive family Kraan of both a job and a home, for the Kraans live in their windmill.

It was to find out what this life was like that I stepped in the village of Koudekerk and hiked across the fields to the Hundsdyk mill.

It was one of those smoky, blue-white days when sheep lie in the shade and pant and pigs wiggle into the cool mid of the canal.

About halfway to the mill either of those activities seemed wiser than hiking, but I persisted.

MRS. KRAAN, looking cool and capable, was hanging out a Tuesday wash. She found my question amusing. Why, living in a windmill was pretty much like living anywhere else—cooking and cleaning and two youngsters to look after.

"It did take a while to get used to the squeak when the mill turns," she admitted. "It never bothered my husband because he grew up here. The mill really belongs to the golden corporation, but his family has kept it for 150 years."

The function of the Hundsdyk mill, now as then, is to keep the polder land dry in winter and wet in summer. When the winter rains come, the mill pumps water from the polder side to the river ditch;



TO BE REPLACED BY ELECTRIC PUMPS? Dutch housewife hopes not

when the summer drought begins the barrier is lifted and water runs back into the polder ditch.

AT THE MOMENT, however, the mill was idle. "Spring and fall, nothing to do," explained Mrs. Kraan. "Of course, even when the mill works, it's just a matter of pointing it and letting the wind blow."

I made a mental note to become a windmill operator.

On the subject of windmill ma-

chinery, Mrs. Kraan became severe. "No excuse for anyone not knowing how a windmill works. Don't you know?"

Back to the wall, I admitted I didn't.

"Just as I thought," said she. "Come along and I'll show you." "I hope you don't think the whole mill was movable," she said over her shoulder as we climbed steps and ladders. "I earnestly denied ever having entertained such an idea."

"IT'S ONLY THE top that turns," she continued as we emerged into the breathless heat of the top itself.

"Of course what I mean is the shaft is what the wind turns, but the top must be rotated so the blades face the wind."

I looked up at the huge wooden gears and shafts that transfer the motion to the water wheel below. Out the tiny window I could see the church spire of the village and two farmers pitching hay. The sight cooled me off somewhat. "Why don't you put a tail on the top, so it would turn into the wind like a weather-vane?" I asked. "Impractical," scoffed Mrs. Kraan. "It would take too much wind to make it work. We do it with a wheel outside."

ON THE WAY DOWN I had occasion to see the layout of the

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windmill-house—bedrooms on the slimmer second floor; living room and kitchen on the roomier ground floor.

Raw beams, smooth with age, and ceiling—huge oak timbers that a lumber connoisseur would cherish.

Everything was Dutch clean: geraniums bloomed in window boxes; a neat row of wooden shoes (the Dutch call them Klompen) stood before the door.

The rotating apparatus was simple enough. Turning the wheel shortened or lengthened a chain attached to a hanging spar, thus pulling the mill into a small arc. The wind, Mrs. Kraan asserted, is nearly always out of the west.

WHILE EXAMINING the wheel, I became conscious of a pleasant burbling sound below the mill. The barrier was closed, but water was leaking back.

Mrs. Kraan waved an idle hand at it. "That's our other noise," she said. "But goodness, that's not bad. I've been in hotels where the faucets leaked worse than that."

Special Assessments On Southfield Board Meeting Agenda

Special assessment districts will again be discussed at the Southfield township board meeting next Tuesday evening.

A hearing will be held to determine costs and methods of raising money for paving in the following special assessment districts: Dorset from Lathrup to Southfield and Cornell and Roxbury from Northwestern to Southfield.

These districts were approved at the last meeting.

Action on creating assessment districts for paving on Magnolia street west of Southfield and Melrose from Northwestern to Southfield was held over until Tuesday because of insufficient signatures on petitions.

ALSO ON THE agenda will be

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- WINDOWS
- FLUSH DOORS
- WOODCRAFT CO. 1184 Grant at Ruffner

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