Question 3 (10 marks)

Assess how useful Sources C and D would be for an historian studying the impact of total war on the home fronts during World War I.

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the TWO sources and the reliability of each one.

Source C is extremely useful for a historian studying the impact of total war on the German home front.

Source D is somewhat less useful and applies to the British home front.

Source C is very useful as it gives a broad picture of the impact of total war on life on the German home front. The ambassador discusses the rationing system and food shortages, the ability of those in higher classes to get around the shortages, the shortages of fuel and the impact that this had on public life and also goes into women in the workforce. All of these are particularly useful for a historian seeking to understand this.

In addition, the source is fairly reliable.

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Question 3 (continued)

Reliable. Although it is a public account of the
ambassador's experiences, which could not be
biased, he is not describing anything that he
played an active role in. Thus, he has no
reason to lie to protect his reputation. He is
merely describing daily life during the war
in Germany, so has no reason to lie. This
enhances the usefulness of the document as
it gives a credible account of events.

Source D is less useful than Source C, as
its content is somewhat more limited. However,
it shows a working woman and demonstrates that
total war extended to the home front and
impacted upon daily habits including
cooking. It also demonstrates that there were
food shortages and caution was needed in
conserving food. Therefore, it is useful, though
it does lack the credibility of Source C.

However, it is less reliable than Source
C, as it is a propaganda poster. What is presented is what the Ministry of
Food wants people to do— it presents an
idealised version of how they want total war
to impact upon the home front, and this
may differ from the reality. It provides
a possible assessment of the impact, but beyond that is
related
showing the use of propaganda, it is not reliable.
Thus, its usefulness is somewhat diminished.

End of Question 3