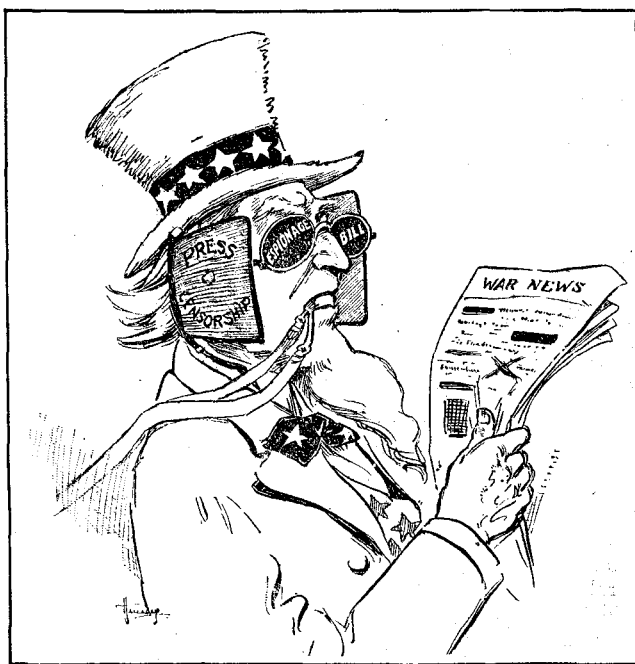


A CENSORSHIP OF OPINION

MUCH CURIOSITY and some apprehension have been expressed in Congress, in the newspapers, and on the street as to the lengths to which the censor would go in using the powers granted to him under a censorship law. Mr. George Creel's recently published "Regulations for the Periodical Press of the United States during the War" have apparently satisfied the curiosity, but they have not entirely quieted the apprehensions. Rather, we find some editors who had formerly supported the Administration's demand for legal censorship beginning to display unmistakable evidences of disquietude. When the Committee on Public Information say that "the only news which we wish to keep from the authorities of Berlin is the kind which would be of tangible help to them in their military operations," the press unanimously applaud. A list of some twenty classes of news matter of obvious interest to the enemy is received with the remark that the editors are quite willing to continue to cooperate voluntarily with the Government in keeping such news quiet. But when Mr. Creel adds in an explanatory section certain notes submitted by the Departments of State, War, and the Navy, editorial hands are thrown up in amazement and protest. Some of the protest is also prophecy that these requests from the Departments will be disregarded, or will end all chances of the enactment of a censorship law, or may even bring discomfiture to the Administration.

Among these objectors, it is interesting to note, are not only such personal organs as Mr. Hearst's *New York American* and such consistent critics of the Administration as the *New York Tribune*, but the staunch pro-Administration *New York World*, and the almost equally friendly Democratic *Brooklyn Eagle*, and the independent and not unfriendly *Newark News* and *New York Evening Post*. Before quoting from some of these papers to show what they consider dangerous tendencies toward suppression of free speech, it is well to call attention to the paragraphs in question. The War Department's warnings against the publication of information regarding troops and



NOT THE RIGHT HEAD-GEAR.

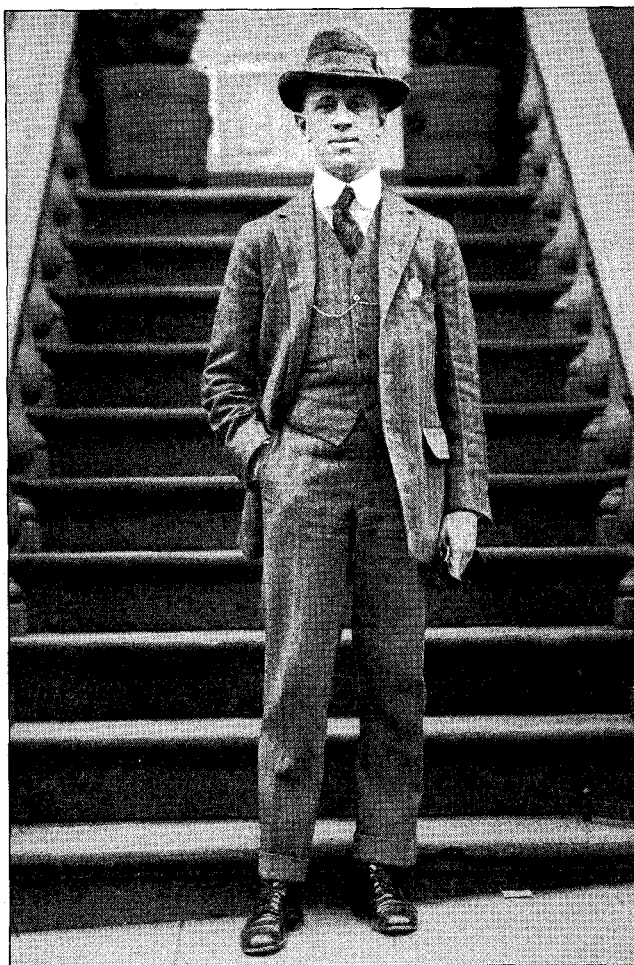
—Halladay in the Providence Journal.

experiments and the Navy Department's requests for silence as to ship movements do not arouse such unfavorable comment as do these sentences of Mr. Creel's statement:

"The Department of State considers it dangerous and of service to the enemy to discuss differences of opinion between the Allies and difficulties with neutral countries.

"The protection of information belonging to friendly countries is most important. Submarine warfare news is a case in point. England permits this Government to have full information, but as it is England's policy not to publish details this Government must support that policy.

"Speculation about possible peace is another topic which may



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OUR PROSPECTIVE CENSOR.

"Censorship and publicity" were named as the two functions of the Government's Committee on Public Information. Mr. George Creel, chosen to head the committee as a "writer of proved courage, ability, and vision," has just taken the people into his confidence by making public the censorship regulations.

possess elements of danger, as peace-reports may be of enemy origin, put out to weaken the combination against Germany.

"Generally speaking, articles likely to prove offensive to any of the Allies or to neutrals would be undesirable."

These suggestions incline the *New York Evening Post* to wonder if censorship is not "going to the official head and turning it." What, it asks, are some of these barred topics?

"'Differences of opinion between the Allies and difficulties with neutral countries.' Is it realized what this would rule out? It would prevent intelligent discussion of the situation in Russia. Between her, under her new Government, and her allies there has unquestionably sprung up a 'difference of opinion.' This is notorious. It has stood out in copious dispatches. It is already the subject of diplomatic negotiation. It has been freely written about in the English and French press. But the American press must not even peep about it! Could there be nonsense more arrant?

"Similarly of 'difficulties' with neutrals. Everybody knows what they are. Spain, and Sweden, and Holland, and Denmark, and Norway, and Switzerland are hard put to it by the blockade and the submarines. The question of their supplies—of their being 'rationed' by the Allies—has fairly reverberated in the news passed by the British censor. The American censor would also pass the news, but would prevent any editor from saying what he thought about it. This almost seems as if it were a

deliberate attempt to make the censorship both hated and absurd.

"Further we read: 'Speculation about possible peace . . . may possess elements of danger, as peace-reports may be of enemy origin, put out to weaken the combination against Germany.' This is Government officials seeing ghosts. Is the new and avowed peace-formula of the Russian Government of enemy origin? And what about the restatement of the American position, which President Wilson has sent, or is to send, to Russia, and which, we are told, will shortly be published? In that there will be at least a hint about 'possible peace': must American newspapers, while allowed to print the facts, be compelled to keep as mum as oysters about them? The thing is preposterous.

"Less important, but still suggestive of official floundering, is the warning about 'submarine warfare news.' To 'publish details' would be against the Government policy. And this was issued almost on the very day when Admiral Lacaze stood up in the French Chamber and told the Deputies everything he knew about the submarines! The whole system of defense against them he set forth with an amount of detail which the American Administration would shrink from as treasonable. The clear-headed and lucid Frenchman said that it was impossible to keep such things secret. He declared that the German Government knew all about French devices, so that it was only a bit of silly pedantry to attempt to make of them a profound mystery. We could wish that some humbug-despising official at Washington would take an equally sensible view."

If differences of opinion exist among the Allies, no good purpose is served, in the opinion of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, "by keeping quiet concerning them and fooling the public of the Allied countries. Germany will learn of those differences through her secret agents regardless of whether the newspapers publish or withhold facts." And as for peace-rumors, the Newark *News* thinks that "greater publicity in connection with the analysis and investigation of suspicious reports would be the opposite of playing into German hands." For instance—

"German moves in promoting the Socialist conference at Stockholm have been exposed by the vigilance of the press. What might not have been the effect if Germany, so far as the American public was concerned, had been allowed to work practically in the dark?"

The Democratic New York *World*, which supported the last censorship clause drafted for the Espionage Bill, thus pays its respects to the State Department's suggestions:

"Nothing could be more objectionable. Nothing could be more un-American. Nothing could be less in harmony with the spirit of every word the President has spoken on the subject."

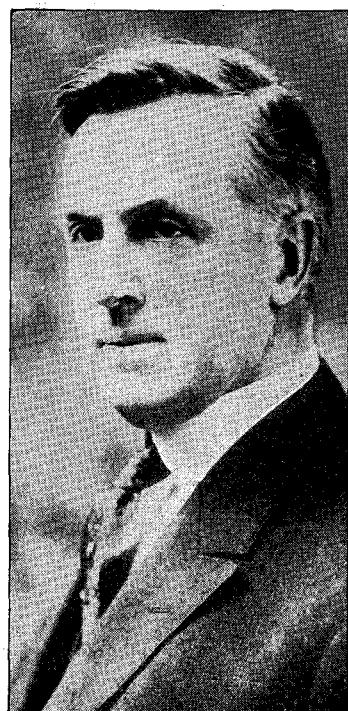
The New York *Globe* joins with Mr. Creel and the State Department in the belief "that attacks upon Great Britain are published in this country for the express purpose of helping Germany as well as merely to express an ancient antipathy." It believes that this sort of thing should be discouraged as "prejudicial to the interests of our country." But, *The Globe* continues:

"There is no clear way of doing this by definite censorship that is not open to objection on other grounds, and better results are likely to be obtained by mere exposure of obvious disloyalty. In his own preliminary statement Mr. Creel effectually disposes of this matter when he says the European belligerents have tried to prevent publications likely to offend their allies, but that his associates agree with him that 'the more full the interally discussion of their mutual problems the better.'"

OUR "WOODEN FLEET" SHRINKS

INSTEAD OF BUILDING A THOUSAND wooden ocean-going cargo-ships to frustrate the U-boats by carrying American supplies to our British, French, Russian, and Italian allies, the Federal Shipping Board has decided that its emergency fleet will consist of ships of steel supplemented by a few hundred wooden ships. Congress has appropriated \$750,000,000 to carry out this program, contracts for many of the wooden ships have been placed with shipyards on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and offers have been accepted from the United States Steel Corporation and the Lackawanna Steel and Iron Company to turn out for the Government 3,000,000 tons of steel shipping in eighteen months. The wooden-fleet program was announced by William Denman, Chairman of the Shipping Board, on April 5, and while some question immediately arose concerning the practicability of 3,000-ton wooden ships propelled by internal-combustion engines, it was not until nearly two months later that the public learned of any serious modification of this program. Then Maj.-Gen. George W. Goethals, general manager of the Federal corporation whose function is to build ships for the Shipping Board, startled the country by announcing that "birds are still nesting in the trees from which the great wooden fleet was to be made," and "the proposition is simply hopeless." Speaking at the annual dinner of the Iron and Steel Institute in New York, on May 25, he cited the United States Steel Corporation's promise to supply 3,000,000 tons of steel ships in eighteen months, and appealed to his hearers for cooperation.

The thousand leading steel-manufacturers who were present joined in pledging him the backing of every steel-plant in the country. The next day Mr. Denman told the press that—



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OUR WOODEN WAR-FLEET.

As Chairman of the Federal Shipping Board, Mr. William Denman announced the novel plan to thwart the U-boats by building a great fleet of 3,000-ton oil-burning wooden cargo-ships for the transatlantic route.

"If all the ships that can be built in the next year or eighteen months are built, there would still be need for a thousand wooden ships to make good the deficiency in our merchant tonnage, even tho the German rate of destruction is reduced to half that established in the month of April. I do not know whether a thousand wooden ships can be built in eighteen months. There was a hope expressed that we could, and I have carefully avoided denying the possibility of a realization of this hope. My reason for not denying it is because I do not care to have our German enemies in Berlin receive that amount of comfort."

Further light is thrown on the situation by the following Washington dispatch to the New York *Tribune*:

"A ship which can be torpedoed certainly two and probably three times and still make its way to port without great loss of cargo is the standard ship planned by Major-General Goethals, general manager of the Shipping Corporation. The ships would be about 15,000 tons each, he said, more than 500 feet long, and constructed with water-tight compartments. A ship of this type should develop sufficient speed to run away from a submarine, without sacrificing a disproportionate space to engine- and boiler-room. It could also be built at less cost, or at the rate of \$120 a ton, compared with \$153 or more for even the 5,000-ton steel ship and about \$135 for the wooden ship."

"Contracts for both steel and wooden ships have been let by the Emergency Fleet Corporation," remarks the Newark *News*, "but, in view of General Goethals's attitude and Mr. Denman's statement, there seems to be no doubt as to which side of the program will be favored."