

says the Board in an appeal to the State Committee of Safety for support of its project, "spend an average of \$600,000,000 a year on public improvements. Suppose one-tenth of this sum were set aside each year in a reserve fund to be expended in a period of industrial depression. Such periods of depression have come on an average of once in ten years during the last fifty years. If the depression should come the sixth year, this reserve fund, spent in materials and pay-roll for new construction, would employ more than one million wage-earners at average wages for a period of twelve weeks. This would be a tremendous stabilizing force. . . .

"The principle has special application at this moment of preparation for National defense. The demand for labor exceeds the supply. Recruiting will intensify this condition. Some work must be postponed. Defense cannot wait."

In the bill now before the Legislature the Industrial Board asks for an Emergency Public Works Commission, to consist of State officials already serving the Commonwealth, and an initial appropriation of \$100,000 toward an emergency fund to be spent when there is another depression in Pennsylvania industry.

The plan, which is largely the work of Mr. Mallery, has much to recommend it. Nothing can be lost by the experiment, since the money held in the proposed fund would grow through interest accretion and buy more service and materials because it would be spent when both labor and materials are cheap. The greatest argument against it is the fact that the demand for money will soon be so great that taxpayers may not want to pay out more than is absolutely necessary for the needs of the moment. But whether or not the proposal is embodied in law at this time, it, or some substitute measure, must eventually become part of our public practice. Too long has it been either a feast or a famine with American business and industry.

THE SPONTANEITY OF DEMOCRACY

ON the 2d day of last April the President recommended to the Congress that it enter the world war. That was three months ago. The inclinations of the people were all against war. Neither the Government nor the people had made any preparations for war. They had re-elected the President because he had kept us out of war. Into the war both he and they had been forced by an irresistible sense of duty both to themselves and to the world. In the three months which have since elapsed the people have:

Declared war by a vote in the House of 373 to 50.

Taken possession of ninety-one German steamships in American ports, and begun a necessary work of repair.

Passed in Congress unanimously a bill providing for a war fund of seven billion dollars.

Agreed to loan three billion dollars to our allies.

By a conference of thirty-two State Governors with the Secretary of Agriculture formed plans for the production, saving, and distribution of food products.

Abandoned the Nation's traditional method of depending on volunteers, and, by a vote in the House of 313 to 109, in the Senate of 81 to 8, enacted a law for the draft of citizens of military age.

In a single day registered nine and a half millions of individuals for military service.

Begun the selection and acceptance of volunteers for special engineering and medical service and for service in the Regular Army and the National Guard.

Passed a bill to deal with spies on American soil and refused to pass a bill providing for censorship of the press.

Appropriated \$3,342,000,000 for war purposes and provided for the building of ships and for the first steps in establishing an aviation corps.

Loaned the Government two billion dollars, and offered the Government another billion which it had not asked for. In this subscription approximately four million individuals joined, representing about one-sixth of all the households in the United States.

Raised by popular subscription for the Red Cross over one hundred million dollars, and nearly or quite finished raising

another fund of three million dollars for the work of the Young Men's Christian Association.

Received with enthusiastic popular welcome commissioners from England, Italy, France, Belgium, and Russia.

Sent a commission with greetings, counsel, and aid to democratic Russia.

Begun the construction of thirty-two camps in various parts of the United States for the assembling and preparation of troops.

Sent to England a fleet of destroyers to hunt submarines, and to France a detachment of troops to join in driving the German army out of France and Belgium.

Organized, by the volunteer co-operation of eminent business men, five war boards to aid the Government and the people in the work of the war:

A General Munitions Board;

An Aircraft Production Board;

A Transportation Board;

A Supplies Board;

A General Health Board;

And before this issue reaches our readers probably will have organized a Food Control Board.

To this partial history of official action taken add that many colleges have become training camps, home guards are being organized in the towns and villages to take the place and perform the duties of the State militia as the latter are called into the Federal service, and thousands of acres of land are being cultivated by the volunteer and spontaneous effort of an immense agricultural army of boys and girls.

America's participation in this war has not been forced on the people by the President and the Congress; it has been forced on the President and the Congress by the people. In autocracy the few think and will, the many obey; in democracy the many think and will, the few obey. It takes a long time to wake up a hundred million people; but when they awake they act as one person, inspired by the same vision, animated by the same spirit, controlled by the same resolve, directed to one and the same end. When that vision is clearly seen and that resolve made, the people put all their resources into the accomplishment of the desired end. It is the people who have voted this war, adopted this unprecedented taxation, contributed this money, agreed to this conscription, undertaken the raising and conserving of the needed food. There has been just enough of opposition to make the Nation's vision clear and the Nation's will resolute.

The decision of the Nation was too long delayed. But since the great resolve was taken the people have given themselves to the prosecution of the war with prompt, vigorous, and spontaneous devotion.

THE CALL TO SERVICE

When the pennant that bears the sign of the Cross, the only flag that is ever flown above the National colors, is hoisted to the top of the staff, enlisted men know that it is the hour for divine service. It is then that acknowledgment is made by the Nation to "the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," the Power that is not only King of kings, but also Ruler of democracies. The flying of that pennant is the answer which such a Nation as ours gives to those arch-infidels who deny that the state owes allegiance to any power other than itself. It is the answer to those who declare that necessity knows no law. It is the answer to those who contend that might makes right. It is the answer to those who act on the assumption that there is no obligation resting on the government of any nation to observe its pledged word or to act in accord with the dictates of conscience.

That symbol of universal moral obligation, which is but another name for religion, is a symbol, therefore, of the cause to which Americans now are consecrating their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. It is well that American soldiers and American citizens who are destined for the life and the hardships of the soldier should be light-hearted. It is essential to victory that they should enter upon their task with cheer as well as courage. Under such a strain men's hearts and nerves will crack without such relief as the British gain through their

humor and the French obtain by their *gaieté*. But the power that will drive the enemy of mankind from the seats of the mighty can be derived only from a faith in the cause which the enemy imperils. It is too much to expect that Americans, and, in particular, those young men of America who are destined to be the comrades of the French and British in France, should so soon after the entrance of America into the war be fully conscious of the sacredness of the cause for which they are to fight. If, however, we are to win, as win we must, all of us in this country must share that faith which has been expressed in no period of history more profoundly than in this great war by young soldiers of France.

Maurice Barrès has collected and published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for July extracts from the letters and diaries of young French soldiers. We quote the words of two of these. Jean Rival, nineteen years of age, in love with life, called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice and responding without self-pity, wrote to his parents: "And why do you always call me 'poor' Jean? We have no liking to be pitied that way! Say 'my dear Jean,' or 'good old Jean,' or 'little Jean,' but why 'poor'? Is it because I am doing my duty like all my comrades?" It is this Jean Rival who wrote in his last letter on the eve of his death:

To-morrow at dawn, to the strains of "Sidi Brahim" and the "Marseillaise," we shall charge the German lines. The attack will probably finish me. On the evening before this great day, which may be my last, I remind you of your promise. Keep up my mother's courage; for a week or more she will receive no news. Tell her that when an advance is at hand no soldier can write to his loved ones; he must content himself with thinking about them. And if the time goes by and she hears nothing of me, let her live in hope; keep up her courage. Then, if you learn at last that I have fallen on the field of honor, let your heart speak those words that will bring her solace.

This morning I attended mass and took communion some few meters back of the trenches. If I die, I shall die as a Christian and a Frenchman.

I believe in God, in France, in Victory. I believe in beauty, youth, and life.

God guard me to the very end. But if my blood is needed for our triumph—thy will be done, O Lord!

And Bernard-Claudius Lavergne, the thirteenth child of the glazier Claudius Lavergne, wrote home to his family expressing what Maurice Barrès says is an experience which we come across again and again in these letters and diaries—the experience of the consciousness of a great presence at one's side. These are the words of Bernard-Claudius Lavergne: "To-night we leave for the trenches. To-night I shall be watching over you, rifle in hand. You know who is watching over me."

In the souls of these French soldiers there is something as necessary for victory as ammunition in their rifles, and it is that which our soldiers, too, must have in order to win.

"I believe in God, in France, in Victory," said Jean Rival. In what do our young men believe?

RECRUITING FOR THE ARMY

The Government is appealing for recruits to fill up the regular service. We say appealing, though perhaps the word is too strong a one to use. It might be more accurate to say that the Government has issued a formal invitation to its sons to join the Regular Army. Though this invitation has been given in a way which ignores to a very great extent the psychological value of enthusiasm and the motives which move the great mass of people, it is nevertheless one worthy of the closest attention by any one able and willing to serve the country.

The officers of the American Regular Army are, we believe, as a body the finest and justest disciplinarians of any army in the world. To serve under such officers is good fortune for any soldier. Though the officers of our new army are likely to be the best volunteer officers in American history, it will naturally take time before they can compare with our Regular Army officers. The man, therefore, who enlists in the Regular Army now begins his soldier's life under the best auspices.

When it comes to a question of health, the value of the trained

officer is particularly evident. Health behind the firing line means efficiency on the firing line. The casualties of war are by no means all from bullets. The opportunity to serve under an officer who knows from experience how to protect his men behind the firing line is one which every man who wants to be a soldier should eagerly search for.

Just disciplinarians and officers who know how to care for their men—these can be found most often in the regular service.

It should not be difficult, if these facts are brought home to the people, to fill up the Regular Army to its full war strength.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD

Saving the food supply of the Nation is a very much larger problem than asking the farmer to raise large crops and the consumer to clean up his plate.

There is one school of thinkers who, while chanting the praise of the man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, overlook the fact that if this same man gets less for the two blades than he does for the one he will not be particularly encouraged to go on with the process of increasing the productivity of his farm. Members of this school also very frequently ignore the fact that if one of these blades of grass is destroyed before it reaches the market the world is no better off than it was before the same blade of grass pushed its head out of the soil.

These are no idle theories. Every practical farmer can tell you many instances where big crops have netted smaller returns than small crops, and where perishable fruits have been needlessly wasted in the hands of middlemen because we have lacked a proper and scientific method of distribution.

Any one who doubts the statement that the two-blade man does not get a proper return for his labor is invited to read the statistics for our potato crops for the last twenty-five years.

Figures are dry reading, but such figures as these must make interesting reading for every farmer who is told by his city friend that the best solution of his trouble lies in the direction of producing bigger crops.

In 1909, 389,195,000 bushels of potatoes brought \$210,662,000.

In 1914 a crop of 409,921,000 bushels brought \$199,460,000.

In 1911 a crop of 292,737,000 bushels brought \$233,728,000.

In 1916 a crop of 285,437,000 bushels brought \$417,063,000.

What would a manufacturer think if he were told that the more he produced the less he would get?

Much of this loss is, of course, due to plain inefficiency in the distribution of our crops. Produce is hauled from the country to the big city and then back again to the village or town market. A superfluity of commission men handling crops at second or third hand subtract from the total which the farmer receives and add to the total which the consumer pays. But the loss is not merely one of inefficiency. It is frequently a loss due to too great efficiency in the accumulation of money which rightly belongs in somebody else's pocket. Here is a part of a report by a Federal Grand Jury on the activities of certain gentlemen who dealt both wisely and well (so far as their own interests were concerned) in the onion crop of 1916:

For the 1916 crop the producers probably received less than two cents a pound. In midwinter many of these onions were sold to retailers, and through them to consumers at ten to fifteen cents a pound. It is claimed by the Government that the tremendous margin between the price accruing to the producer and the price paid by the consumer was largely due to the illegal control of the trade exercised by this association.

We find this quotation in the "Rural New Yorker."

Over eighty of these speculators in onions have been indicted. In the reorganization of our present system of distributing food—whether such reorganization involves indictments or not—should be found some of the most potent weapons for attacking our threatened food shortage. Without the control and reorganization of our agencies for the distribution of food we shall write ourselves down as penny wise and pound foolish—as a Nation which is attempting to save at the bung while it wastes at the spigot.