

tary operations. The bill was not passed without a debate which, in the House of Representatives at least, proved illuminating as to the ignorance that prevails among many supposedly intelligent Congressmen and their unreadiness to put the country immediately in proper condition. Nevertheless, when the actual test of the strength of the volunteer system came—that is to say, when the motion to make the bill provide for volunteers instead of for the selective draft was put—those who still championed the volunteer system were beaten by a vote of 313 to 109, and the House finally passed the Draft Bill by the impressive vote of 397 to 24. A few minutes later it went through the Senate by a vote of 81 to 8. Singularly enough, the chief Administration spokesman in the House in behalf of an efficient army to fight the Germans was the Hon. Julius Kahn, of California, born in Germany and a Republican.

The principal provisions of the bill are :

1. To raise the regular army to its maximum war strength of 287,000 from its present strength of about 145,000.
2. To increase the strength of the National Guard to a war footing of about 625,000 from its present strength of about 130,000.
3. To draft immediately 500,000 men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-seven, as provided by the Senate, or twenty-one and forty, as provided by the House.
4. To draft an additional quota of 500,000 men and begin their training whenever, in his judgment, the President deems it necessary.
5. To prescribe regulations for the registration, calling out, and training of both these draft armies.
6. To exempt legislative, executive, and judicial officers of the United States and of all the States, and as well members of religious sects with convictions against war.
7. To empower the President to exempt or to draft for partial service postal and custom-house clerks, arsenal, armory, and navy-yard workmen, and also workmen in certain industries, together with pilots and mariners, persons who have dependent families, and all persons physically or morally deficient.
8. To double the pay of enlisted men during the war.

The Senate amendments included the two following important provisions :

To authorize the raising of not exceeding four volunteer infantry divisions for service abroad (the so-called Roosevelt volunteer amendment, adopted by a vote of 56 to 31). A good amendment.

To prohibit the sale of liquor at army posts and training camps and to army men anywhere while in uniform.

Senator McCumber's proposal to eliminate from the bill the exemption of persons who are deterred by religious belief from taking up arms was rejected, and Senator Gronna's amendment making it unlawful to use food products for making liquor was tabled.

CHANGING VIEWS IN CONGRESS

Thus the principal points of difference in the Draft Bill between the House and Senate include the difference in the age subject to draft, the so-called Roosevelt volunteer amendment, and the prohibition section.

Of these differences, that concerning age has excited much comment in army circles. The bill as drawn by experienced military critics, under the eye of the War Department, provided for a selective draft of all able-bodied men, not otherwise exempt, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five years. This does not mean that a lad of nineteen would be sent to the seat of war. He would presumably have a long training before taking part in a battle. For intensive training, of course, the age limits as indicated by the War Department are superior to those provided by Congress. But when the bill was introduced into Congress it was seen that, in order to pass it, a concession would have to be made in the age limit, and hence the minimum age was increased by two years, the final limit being put at twenty-seven by the Senate. In the House, where the difficulty of passing the Draft Bill was much greater, the final limit had also to be increased much further, thus inevitably increasing the number of exemptions and adding greatly to the immense amount of clerical labor required to put the law in operation, facts doubtless quite patent to the politicians who insisted on this amendment.

Public and Congressional opinion in favor of the so-called

Roosevelt volunteer amendment has been increased by the appeals of the French Commissioners in general, and of Marshal Joffre in particular.

The passage of the Draft Bill registers a notable change in the temper of Congress. Last autumn no one familiar with Congressional opinion would have prophesied that a bill for the creation of an enormous army by a draft, without preliminary experimentation through a call for volunteers, could pass both houses. But since the breaking of diplomatic relations with Germany and the declaration of war, the temper of Congress has changed materially. It also changed patently during the progress of debate. It is still changing, and this is due probably more than to any other cause to Marshal Joffre's thrilling appeal.

CONGRESS AND OUR ALLIES

Congress has voted money and men for our own National defense. What is Congress doing for our allies?

For them it must provide, not only money and men, but also munitions, food, and ships.

Congress has provided money for our allies—\$3,000,000,000. We shall doubtless send men; and Congress has now made it legal for our allies to recruit their citizens in the United States. We continue to send munitions. But our allies' special needs just now are two—bread and boats.

The question is, therefore, how to increase our food and shipping. We must do this, not only for our own sake, but especially for the sake of our allies. We must furnish food, and we must furnish ships to carry it.

The Federal Shipping Board's praiseworthy energy in mobilizing ship-builders and shipyards has now been followed by Congressional action authorizing the President to take title to the German ships now in its custody. They are over ninety in number, and have a total tonnage of over 600,000; they are of many sizes, up to the huge Vaterland, the largest ship in the world, which exceeds 54,000 tons. These ships are already admirably adapted to the transportation either of soldiers or of foodstuffs to Europe. Many of them are cargo carriers, and the transformation of the passenger ships not needed for the carriage of soldiers abroad into freighters would not be difficult. The immediate necessity is to repair the machinery of these boats, which was crippled, in many cases most seriously, by the crews, following orders received from Germany on January 31. This repair was begun as soon as the Federal authorities seized the ships on April 6, when the President issued his proclamation announcing the recognition of a state of war.

The food problem is a double one, namely, to increase our own supply, getting whatever is needed to our allies, and to prevent any from reaching Germany. The Administration Food Control Bills before Congress provide for an agricultural census, for aid to producers, for the licensing and supervision of food agencies, and for price regulation, if necessary. In addition, the Senate has now passed a bill to increase the supply of fertilization, appropriating \$10,000,000 for the Government's purchase of nitrates for this purpose, for their transportation in Government vessels from Chile, and for their sale by Federal authorities at cost to farmers.

As to preventing our food from getting to Germany, an Embargo Bill has been favorably reported (it has now been made part of the Spy Bill, whose sweeping provisions for censorship are causing much adverse comment); it would authorize the President to regulate or prevent entirely, at his discretion, the exportation from the United States of all goods which might bring aid or comfort to the enemy. This measure doubtless interests Germany more than any other legislative proposition before Congress. It may also grimly interest the Scandinavian countries, Holland, and Switzerland, from which, despite all Allied efforts to keep goods from entering Germany, foodstuffs and war supplies have been and, it is believed, are being received.

POSTAL RATES AND NATIONALISM

One of the provisions for raising revenue to meet the cost of war which have been proposed and are before Congress would make considerable increase in the rates of postage.

On all first-class matter (which includes letters) there would

be added one cent for every ounce or fraction of an ounce. Thus the least postage payable on a letter would be three cents, and on a postal card two cents.

Besides this increase there is also proposed an increase on all second-class matter. This includes newspapers and periodicals mailed at regular intervals and paying postage by the pound. As proposed by the sub-committee in charge of the War Taxation Bill, the country would be divided into zones. In the first zone, within a given radius from the point of publication, the postage would be increased by a hundred per cent, in the second and third zones by two hundred per cent, in the fourth and fifth by three hundred per cent, in the sixth and seventh by four hundred per cent, and in the eighth zone by seven hundred per cent.

Any increase in postage, like an increase in taxation, is a burden. The people of the United States must be prepared to bear extra burdens now. But the Government is morally bound to see that those burdens are distributed as equitably as possible, and that they are not so heavy that they cannot be borne by those upon whom they are laid.

It is notorious that the increase in the price of paper has put a heavy drain upon the financial resources of the publishing business. It would be to the defeat of its own purpose if the Government should exact from that business such a heavy postal rate as to drive periodicals out of business, and thus out of existence as sources of postal revenue altogether.

More important, however, than the question of the weight of the burden is its equitable distribution. The zone system means that the burden would be distributed inequitably. To-day intelligence can be transmitted by letter or periodical across the continent as easily as from one county to its neighboring county. All the people bear together all the burden. Under the zone system those who live at a distance would have to bear more of the burden than those who live near to the source of their information. A subscriber to a periodical who lived in the eighth zone could not get his periodical at the same rate at which a subscriber in the first zone could get it. Readers of periodicals, therefore, would soon tend to confine their subscriptions to publications near at home. Local interest would take the place of National interest.

The zone system applied to the dissemination of information through the mails is a blow at the National spirit. This is not a matter that chiefly concerns the publishers of periodicals. It chiefly concerns the whole people of the Nation.

THE PROBLEM OF WAR PROHIBITION

That the Government is seriously considering the problem of husbanding our food supplies by the prohibition of the manufacture of spirituous liquor during the period of the war is indicated by an announcement from Washington that Dr. Alonzo E. Taylor has been designated by the Department of Agriculture to undertake an exhaustive study of the proposals to limit the use of grains in the manufacture of intoxicants. When Dr. Taylor's recommendations have been made to the Government, the country at large will be in a better position than it is at present to judge of the economic significance and the feasibility of this far-reaching proposal.

In the meantime it is interesting to notice the growing demand for this measure from all classes of the population. One of the most interesting expressions of the attitude of leading business men towards the proposition is contained in a recent statement made by Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip, President of the National City Bank of New York, the largest bank in the country. Mr. Vanderlip says:

I strongly favor complete National prohibition. I believe we are facing a serious test of our National character and efficiency, and am firmly convinced that a National prohibition measure would be of transcendent importance in its effect upon the National spirit in conserving and increasing our food supply, and in raising the efficiency of the Nation.

The man power released from the liquor industries could be directed into productive channels where the need for labor will be acute, and thus be readily absorbed. The needs of the agricultural and industrial situation will make this a peculiarly opportune time to put through a National prohibition law with minimum shock to our economic machinery during the readjustment.

The business interests involved should be fairly dealt with, but many of the plants can be readily converted to important industrial uses. A National prohibition measure would do much to wake up the people to a realization of what war means and demands.

Certainly Mr. Vanderlip cannot be regarded as a visionary agitator or a man unfamiliar with the economic problems involved in the destruction or the suspension of a great industry.

FARMERS AND FOOD REGULATION

The problem of fixing a percentage profit for manufactured articles is simple compared with the problem of determining the cost of farm products. Any arbitrary plan to fix a maximum price per bushel for corn or wheat at the present time is more likely to discourage the production of food than to encourage the conservation and equitable distribution of our food supply. This is not to assert that the Government may not have to come to the fixing of maximum prices for food. It is merely to point out that the discussion of fixing maximum prices is something which can profitably be postponed until after the harvesting of the crops. If there is to be any price-fixing at the present time, let it be in the shape of a guaranteed minimum, for only by such a method can the farmers of the country be assured that if they respond to the country's rightful appeal for an increased acreage and an enlarged production, they will be protected against undue financial loss.

Farmers in the past have not without reason looked with suspicion upon an appeal to grow two blades of grass where one grew before. Large crops produced at the sacrifice of labor and capital have often resulted in smaller returns than poor crops. This has been because of our antiquated methods of distribution, marketing, and storage.

We do not believe that such a result is possible this year, but in guarding the farmer against the suspicion of such a possibility the Government will at the same time guard the Nation and our allies against any willful reduction of our food supply.

In this connection it is interesting to note an offer made by the Northeast Nebraska Live Stock Breeders' Association. In an open letter to Secretary Houston, commenting upon the offer of the packers to permit the Government to fix arbitrarily the price of their product or to turn over to the Government the packing plants of the country, this farmers' association says:

If Mr. Armour proposes to turn over the packers' plants to the Government and run them for the benefit of the Government for a minimum profit, we will not allow him to be more magnanimous than we. We, too, will turn over our plants. We will turn our farms over to the Government and operate them for the Government on a basis of three per cent on the investment. This is only a bondholder's percentage, and the bondholder does not give his services, as we propose to do, without extra wage or salary. This offer is bona fide, and we are prepared to stand by it. . . .

We desire some security for the future. No stockman to-day knows what to do. The tendency is to cash corn and quit the producing of finished beef. This would be a National calamity, and in some way must be averted. Secure to the feeder and producer of corn-fed beef and pork adequate remuneration for his labor and feed, and the future supply of corn-fed beef and pork is assured.

We agree with the further statement of the Northeast Nebraska Live Stock Breeders' Association that the Government at the present time is probably not prepared to go either into the farming business or the packing business, but the offer which we have here reported is an offer which accentuates the need of protecting our farmers and meat producers against unfair demands on the part of the consuming public.

THE COUNTY AGENT AGAIN

We have already, on more than one occasion, pointed out the need of increasing the activity of the county agricultural agents of the country at this time. In no way can the agricultural effort of the country be better organized and encouraged than through the efforts of those county agents provided for through the co-operation of the Federal Government and the localities where they have been assigned to duty. The duties