

The Public

An International Journal of Fundamental Democracy

Compulsory Military Service

The Open Forum

Fred A. Moore

Published Weekly

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Volume XIX

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The Public

An International Journal of Fundamental Democracy

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EDITORIAL

In view of the fact that President Wilson has just been re-elected by pacifist voters, opposed to militarism in any form, the efforts to push through Congress a compulsory service law is little else than an expression of contempt for the popular will. S. D.

* * *

President Wilson's peace note is a service to humanity. Scarcely debatable is the reasonable nature of his request that the warring nations state the terms on which they will accept peace. Anyone confident of the justice of his cause should be willing to do that. The opportunity has now been presented to end the war. There would perhaps be less doubt of its acceptance if refusal required the statesmen responsible to go to the trenches and remain on the firing line until hostilities cease. That the President's action has been viciously attacked and misrepresented was to be expected. Nearly every impartial act has been treated that way by rabid partisans since the

war began. The attempt to make his note appear as a "pro-German" move deserves no more consideration than previous denunciations of his neutral policy as "pro-British." S. D.

* * *

From six private citizens of Chicago is due a public announcement as to whether they favor legislation to take from them, for war purposes, in case of war, all their wealth, with no guarantee of its repayment. These citizens are Messrs. Julius Rosenwald, Victor F. Lawson, Frank G. Logan, H. S. Vail, H. M. Byllesby and William Wrigley, Jr. They have subscribed heavily to a fund for legislation to compel younger and poorer citizens to abandon their personal affairs in order to take military training, and, in case of war, to risk their health and lives on the firing line. Since they are trying to impose on others a heavy burden from which they themselves are to be exempt, they have no right to remain silent concerning their willingness to submit to a less severe sacrifice. They were asked to express themselves in an open letter by Mr. Waldo H. Browne, which appeared on page 1147 of the current volume of The Public. So far they have not replied. Can it be that so public-spirited a citizen as Julius Rosenwald objects to making that personal sacrifice when he would have imposed upon others a greater one? Is the same to be said of Messrs. Lawson, Logan, Vail, Byllesby and Wrigley? If not, why the silence? S. D.

* * *

Says the Chicago Herald in discussing taxation in its issue of December 19:

Ability to pay is generally recognized by economists as the most equitable standard for taxation.

If the Herald's statement is true, it would appear that the "economists" know so little of the principles of the science, in which they are supposed to be experts, that they believe it equitable for a government to base charges for its services on a standard that would be absurd and inequitable in measuring payment for services of any other kind. Charges for services performed by the merchant, manufacturer, professional man, farmer and laborer are not fixed in accordance with the financial ability of the purchaser. Not even an "economist" holds that they should be. There is no reason why the principle that prevails in fixing

the price of a theater ticket or the services of an architect should not apply in fixing the amount due from a citizen to the government for benefits conferred. In every private business prices charged can be justified on no other ground than that they represent value of services rendered. Until taxation has been made to conform to the same rule it must lack fairness. "Economists" who take any other position may well be compared with "mathematicians" who deny that twice two is four.

S. D.

* * *

It is encouraging to note that a Tennessee jury has awarded damages to a Negro victim of an officious white sheriff's illegal brutality. Tennessee is ahead of the Northern States which tolerate police interference with free speech, brutality against strikers and frame-ups when convictions are desired of persons obnoxious to certain powerful interests. It is needless to add that the outcome of this Tennessee incident shows a far better state of affairs than prevails in South Carolina, where nothing has yet been done to punish the members of a mob of white barbarians at Abbeville, who recently lynched a cultured Negro for no other crime than resistance to an official's unlawful attack.

S. D.

Importing Argentine Corn.

Among the deceptions practiced on the gullible voter by the issueless party during the recent campaign none was more spectacular than the importation of "a million bushels of Argentine corn." It combined a vividness of imagination and a boldness of execution worthy of the party at its best in the post bellum days, and it laid bare a credulity that would have been conspicuous in the Middle Ages. To convince the American farmer that nothing but a Republican high tariff could keep the wolf from his door it was announced that because the Democrats had put corn on the Free List, arrangements had been made for the importation of a million bushels of Argentine corn—with an unlimited amount to follow. And in order that voters too dense to visualize this calamitous condition from the statement might be made to grasp the fact, a photograph of a car labeled "Argentine corn" billed to Peoria, Illinois, was published. This carload of corn delivered in Peoria a few days before election was ocular proof that Argentina was ready to starve us to death by dumping her corn upon us.

* * *

There is little doubt that the trick did much to keep in countenance the voters who were in des-

perate need of an excuse for believing what they wanted to believe. Yet, now that the election has passed, how cheap and tawdry it all looks. Of the transaction, James W. Hill of Peoria writes:

There was one car only of Argentine corn brought to Peoria before election by Clark and Company, distillers. The head men of this company are Republican politicians. It is generally understood they lost some \$500 on the deal. The corn was not used by this firm in their business, but was sold to a concern here for chicken feed. This corn is of small kernels, about like our native pop corn. Had it been of any value to the distillers they certainly would have used it, as they buy several hundred carloads of native corn every month. The deal was for political effect.

From other sources it is learned that the price of South American corn, as given in the market reports of American newspapers at the time was quoted at ten cents a bushel higher there than in the United States. But it was a "good enough Morgan till after the election," and helped to roll up the enormous Republican votes among the Illinois farmers. Deception and credulity are the foundation upon which rests the protective tariff.

S. C.

Where Responsibility Belongs.

A fitting reply was sent by Alfred D. Cridge of Portland to an appeal from a charitable organization directed by some active opponents of the Land and Loan Amendment, rejected at the recent election. Mr. Cridge said in part:

I have contributed all my life to the cause of JUSTICE quite heavily in proportion to means and strength; but to trifling charity but little.

There are men in this community who receive as pensions from it, for doing nothing but holding back its development, hundreds of thousands of dollars per annum. I would levy on them sufficient to give, as a matter of right, to the needy widows and orphans, the aged veterans of industry, the blind, the disabled and the sick.

These forestallers and idle landholders will not contribute one-half of one per cent of their annual incomes to charity—not one of them. Why not levy on them by law for the real needs of the community?

That is what I and a few others have as a cause to contribute to. Over 43,000 citizens of Oregon have voted with us. Some day there will be 143,000, and then the banks of charity will be as extinct as the dodo.

* * *

Oregon is one place where it is easy to determine the personal responsibility of each citizen for poverty and suffering that charity is designed to alleviate. It rests on every one of the 154,000 voters who had a part in rejection of the Land and Loan Amendment. Having prevented removal of the cause of poverty, such of these

voters, who are not themselves victims of poverty, are morally obligated to do all they can to relieve it. Their obligation to the poor is of the same nature as that of anyone who, through carelessness or design, inflicts undeserved injury upon another. They should pay their debt themselves, and not call for help on citizens like Mr. Cridge, whose efforts to abolish poverty they have opposed and temporarily checked. S. D.

Inheritance Tax Inadequate.

The Chicago Tribune, that strange relic of torism, caught a fleeting glimpse of the truth underlying the land question, when it said in an editorial of the 19th:

Ten families own a very large part of Chicago real estate. Five families control—and are supported by—enormous land holdings. One estate owns four per cent of all Chicago land. Each year sees additions to the holdings of these estates. During 1916 more than one million dollars' worth of land, the best land for commercial purposes, was added to them. Between these ten families most Loop property is monopolized. The ten families themselves are scattered all over the world. Few members of them personally count for anything in Chicago. They are able, because Chicago is a profitable and prosperous enterprise, to build palaces abroad. They can buy peerages if they like. They can live in California or Florida or England or Italy. They can forget all about Chicago.

After enumerating the objections to such men as citizens, how little they contribute to its welfare, how slightly they are affected by public opinion, and noting that every other city in the United States is faced with the same problem, that "New York tenements build palaces for cows on the English Astor estate, contribute to English war funds, buy peerages," the Tribune suggests that the way out is for Chicago, New York or other cities similarly situated, to impose an inheritance tax so graded that no family or group of families can ever accumulate so much property as to destroy the fact of our republic.

* *

How inadequate a remedy for so plain an evil. An inheritance tax does not distinguish between an enterprising merchant or manufacturer, who is contributing so much toward the upbuilding of the city, as upon the absentee land owner who renders the city no service for what he receives. Such lack of discrimination between good and bad agencies will bring no relief. The only objection to the course of the land owner lies in the fact that he renders no equivalent for what the city has added to the value of his land. Justice requires, not that the tax be laid alike upon all rich, but that the values made by the city be taken

for the use of the whole people. The remedy for absentee landlordism lies in the hands of the people. It is very simple, and very effective.

S. C.

COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

The testimony given before the House and Senate Military committees indicates a strength in the conscription movement that should keep Pacifists on the watch. General Scott and General Wood declare the necessity for compulsory military service. Secretary Baker of the War Department, who appears to hesitate between "a universal military service" and a "selective conscription," says: "The theory of a common interest in a common country would be satisfied by a method of selecting soldiers that was not voluntary in character." But he hesitates to declare for such a policy till the voluntary system of a national guard has been given a fair trial.

* *

It should not be forgotten that the question underlying the whole problem of national defense is one of individual liberty. Whatever may be one's moral duty to support the government of his country, the individual must be permitted to determine his own course of action; for without such freedom all political liberty is brought into question, and hangs upon the whim of officials in power. In matters of ordinary political procedure the citizen may bow to the will of the majority, for a wrong decision may be corrected; but when the case is one of life and death, as in war, the individual's will should be paramount. If governments could be maintained only by sacrificing the lives of their citizens, the problem would resolve itself into a question of whether the maintenance of such a government were worth the sacrifice. But, since the military arm is among the smallest of the supports upon which government rests, it is the height of injustice for a majority to dragoon a minority into supporting a war policy.

* *

Wars are declared by individual men, and they are fought by other individual men. To compel the citizen to become a soldier, and submit his body to the will of a President or of a Congress, is to wipe out at one stroke of the pen the liberty and freedom for which America is supposed to stand. There is already enough power for mischief in the hands of political leaders. To back that power with the support of a vast military establishment is to set up an overmastering temptation to political adventurers to seek advancement

through military operations. Whenever a citizen is compelled to fight in a war not of his own choosing, that moment the government confesses itself unworthy of preservation. A good government will never fail of defenders; any other needs home correction. Several proposals have been made for training men to the use of arms—in which education and useful service is combined—that will provide all the men that are likely to be needed. Military men like General Scott and General Wood, excellent men in their own field, see the need only of soldiers; but the statesman gives his first consideration to the making of citizens.

s. c.

THE OPEN FORUM.

A new agency is developing for the promotion of fundamental democracy. It is calculated to eliminate a real evil in our community life—i. e., class-and-group consciousness. These are the sources of much evil in our boasted fellowship of the common life. They make the vaunted word "community" capable of being defined only as an ideal. Parties, occupations, clubs, fraternities, churches, newspapers, and even schools draw lines of cleavage all through the rank and file of people. Seldom, save on the street, or possibly in parks and public schools, do we find a cross-section of the whole group. Even there some classes are conspicuous by their absence, and there is only the coming together as a mass. How and where do we or can we get together fundamentally? Can there be secured a convergence of all the winds of social thought and ideals and purposes? How can each fraction be brought to know not only how each other fraction lives, but what it feels and aspires to give, to have, and to be? "We hate each other only because we do not know each other." Capital and labor make war on each other only because the other side is not known and is not understood. Aliens and native sons, conservatives and radicals, orthodox and heretics, whites and blacks, all need to give themselves the acid test of really knowing their opposites—if we are to have a *community*. As one of our modern prophets, W. E. B. DuBois, has put it:

Herein lies the tragedy of the age,
Not that men are poor;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked,
Who is good?
Not that men are ignorant,
What is truth?

Nay, but that men should know so little of each other.

One inspiring answer to the questions raised above has come during the last decade, and especially in the last two or three years, by the development across the country of at least two hun-

dred open forums of many different patterns. Fundamentally they are public meetings held in churches, schoolhouses, theaters and public halls, where the people come together to discuss the questions of their common life. The speakers at these meetings are quite exclusively men and women who have acquired standing as prophets of a better social order, regardless of the angle of their vision or of their "isn." The only conditions laid down are that they have a real message, that they know whereof they speak, and that they know how to speak. Of course they must be sincere. For the forums are engaged with the serious side of the common life and can in no wise exploit or be exploited by entertainers and "mere" lecturers.

The lectures are followed by discussion periods. In the most effective type of forum this discussion is by the single method of questions from the floor, and answers by the speaker of the day. Often this procedure is attacked as being too narrow and really undemocratic. Advanced thinkers in the audience protest that they are being restricted and suppressed. The answer to their criticism is twofold. Experience proves that an open public meeting for free speech becomes the haven of every crank in the community, whose line of talk may be most likely mere rant, or at least too much for the average man and woman to endure willingly. That results in melting down the meetings to a single group of those most nearly in sympathy with the average free speaker. It nullifies the meeting as a community gathering, one that as nearly as possible represents a cross-section of the entire community. This spirit in human nature can well be recognized for the sake of the community-ambitions of the forum. Then, again, the question is justified because it permits a much larger number in the audience to have some part in the discussion. It is obvious that many more questions with pithy answers can be permitted in an hour than even two-minute speeches. And how difficult it is or would be to limit speeches to two or three minutes.

The fundamental democracy of the forum, and its given name, "Open," is based on its free platform. The forum in the first place is non-partisan and non-sectarian. It is also free and open to all ideas, programs, philosophies and ideals for community life by refusing in itself to be committed to any one or more of these. And, still further, it is as brave as it is free, because it is unafraid. It would assist in getting the truth and the right and the ideal into the social mind and conscience by getting every suggestion of the truth and the right. So it welcomes all kinds of prophets, conservatives or radical, orthodox or heretic, native or alien, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, black or white. It is uncommitted and unafraid.

Who will fail to realize that this is a startlingly fresh institution in our modern life? Churches with their dogmas divide, each newspaper is more

or less partisan, economics, social organizations and functions, class prejudices and every particular propaganda divide people into the pros and cons, the ins and the outs. The forum casts no shadows and draws no lines. It is organized on a basis that appeals to all alike, regardless of present or past or future. And it works! Up and down and across the country and over the border in Canada you can find these *community* meetings functioning true to type.

And it works in all kinds of communities! In downtown metropolitan centers, in residential suburbs, in smaller manufacturing towns with polyglot populations, and even in homogeneous rural communities—successful in a splendid measure.

The parentage of these forums is divided between Cooper Union in New York and Ford Hall in Boston. From the latter, with George W. Coleman as leader, has gone out the missionary spirit for these agencies of democracy. The history of Ford Hall has been written up under title, "Democracy in the Making," a phrase which seems to crystallize the spirit and purpose of the forums. As a means of providing efficiently for the present forums and their rapidly increasing tribe, there has been organized the Open Forum Speakers' Bureau at 26 Pemberton Square, Boston. Now comes the journal of the movement, "The Community Forum," published at 800 Ford Building, Boston. The fourth annual national conference of forum leaders and friends will be held in Chicago under the auspices of two forums, the West Side and the South Side People's Forums, in April, 1917.

FRED A. MOORE,

Director of the Chicago West Side and the South Side People's Forums.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Week Ending Tuesday, December 26, 1916.

Congressional Doings.

Secretary of War Baker appeared before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs on December 19 and declared "the obligation to serve the country is a universal one." In regard to preparedness he said: "Whether universal military service or a selective conscription is the correct answer I do not know. The theory of a common interest in a common country would be satisfied by a method of selecting soldiers that was not voluntary in character." On December 20 Howard H. Gross of Chicago, of the Universal Military Training League, and Edward Harding of the Boy Scouts, appeared before the committee. Both advocated compulsory service. Mr. Gross declared that the army should not be used for constabulary duty and thereby hoped to reconcile organized labor to universal service. [See current volume, page 1216.]

After rejecting by a vote of 38 to 38, on December 19, the Underwood amendment for a referendum of the District of Columbia on the pending local prohibition bill the measure was put on the calendar for January 9, to be voted on. Earlier in the day the Underwood amendment had been changed to allow women to vote on the referendum, but it disfranchised non-taxpayers and illiterates. On December 21 the Judiciary Committee reported favorably on the National Prohibition Constitutional Amendment.

* *

The Porto Rican Government bill which, as it passed the House, disfranchised the greater part of the inhabitants, will be amended in the Senate if an agreement is kept between the Commission advocating the bill and representatives of the American Federation of Labor. The agreement arrived at on December 17 is to substitute the following for the section disfranchising all who pay less than three dollars in direct taxes.

Sec. 35.—That at the first election held pursuant to this act, the qualified electors shall be those having the qualifications of voters under the present law; thereafter voters for all offices elected by the people shall have the qualifications prescribed by the Legislature of Porto Rico and be comprised within one of the following classes: (A) Those who at the election of 1917 were legal voters and exercised the right of suffrage. (B) Those who are able to read or write either Spanish or English. (C) Those who are bona fide taxpayers in their own name in an amount of not less than three dollars per annum.

The agreement further provides for unconditional elimination of the clause making ineligible to membership in the Legislature persons who do not own property worth at least \$500. [See current volume, pages 513, 604, 678, 1196.]

* *

A resolution was introduced in the House by Congressman Bailey on the 22d strongly endorsing the President's note to the belligerents and congratulating him on his stand.

* *

The House adjourned on December 22 until January 3.

Supreme Court Violates Constitution.

By a decision of the Supreme Court of North Dakota, the three recently elected Farmers' Non-partisan League Supreme Judges will be kept out of their seats for one month. The State Constitution provides that the judicial term shall begin on the first Monday in December. It has been customary for the judges hitherto to disregard this provision and take office in January, holding over for a month at the end of their term. The Non-partisan League Judges demanded their seats of

the retiring Judges on the date set by the Constitution. These refused on the ground of custom. The Attorney General thereupon asked the Supreme Court for a writ summoning both retiring and elected Judges before it. The two holdover Judges selected three district Judges to serve temporarily on the court in place of the three retiring members. Then on the ground that they, too, were interested in the case, the holdovers withdrew and the three district Judges selected two others to complete the panel. The newly elected Judges held a court so constituted to be illegal and refused to appear. The decision upheld the retiring Judges in their reversal of the Constitution. [See current volume, pages 1122, 1170.]

I. and R. in Idaho.

The Idaho Direct Legislation League declares that two-thirds of the Legislature chosen in November is pledged to its I. and R. amendment prepared for submission. Governor Alexander, who has been re-elected, is also in favor of it. The bill contains provisions giving the Legislature an opportunity to act on initiated measures before submitting them to the people, abolishes the veto power of the Governor over initiated measures approved by popular vote, requires a three-fourths vote of the Legislature to amend or repeal an adopted initiative act, and provides for an official campaign pamphlet, as in Oregon.

Tax Reform News.

The annual convention of the Maryland State Grange, held at Easton on December 8, adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That we favor the abolition of the general property tax and favor the taxation of the value of land irrespective of improvements.

Resolved, That we favor the taxation of all land held out of use at its full selling or speculative value.

* * *

The Nebraska Farmers' Congress, held at Omaha on December 12 to 14, adopted the following resolution:

We believe that the general property tax required by the Nebraska constitution distributes the burden of taxation unequally, that it cannot be impartially enforced, and that it has so broken down in its administration as to demand a change. We, therefore, urge upon the Nebraska legislature the necessity of submitting a constitutional amendment, the adoption of which will permit the passage of modern tax laws.

The resolution was adopted after a discussion of the land value taxation laws of western Canada. Opposition was voiced by Professor H. C. Filley, who denounced the Singletax as confiscatory, and partial to the rich. Issue was taken with the

professor by a farmer, J. O. Shroyer of Richardson County, owner of a Canadian farm, which he declared to be taxed lower proportionately than his Nebraska farm. A prediction that all farmers would be advocating Singletax in twenty-five years was made by another farmer, Carl Slatt of Clay County. The congress also declared for government ownership of railroads.

* *

The Site-Value Taxation League of Michigan is circulating an Initiative petition to exempt from taxation \$1,000 of personal property owned by every individual or corporation, and \$1,000 of improvements in the same way.

* *

The annual farmers' convention at St. Paul, Minnesota, held on December 8, under the auspices of the Equity Co-operative Exchange, adopted resolutions urging all States of the Northwest to enact uniform legislation. In regard to taxation the recommendation is as follows:

"A law increasing the personal tax exemption to at least \$200.

"A law providing for a lower tax on structures and improvements than upon land. The present system of taxation penalizes a man for erecting buildings or otherwise improving his land, by forcing him to pay a penalty to the State in the form of increased taxes. In Canada, New Zealand and other places, land is taxed the same amount, regardless of structures and improvements. We endorse the principles of the Canadian and New Zealand acts as one which will serve to equalize the present intolerable burden of taxation, and one which will tend to relieve the farmer, the laborer and the business man of moderate means, from the present unfair burden of taxation which he bears."

The meeting is reported as the largest gathering of farmers ever assembled in convention in the Northwest. Delegates from all northwestern States were present. [See volume xviii, pp. 691, 810, current volume pages 131, 227, 249, 418, 509, 517, 539, 584, 612, 661, 794, 1047, 1060, 1067, 1114.]

Land Monopoly in California.

A report to Governor Johnson of California was made on December 9 by the State Commission on Land Colonization and Rural Credits. The report finds that the prices asked for unimproved farm lands in California are the highest in the United States. Since 1900 land prices have been multiplied by from two to ten, while the profits of farming have increased but little. "Hence some years ago men who bought land at \$50 an acre could pay high interest rates and get out of debt, while today interest payments alone are causing many recent settlers a tremendous struggle."

It further declares tenant farming to be a growing menace. As a remedy it urges State acquirement of land, to be sold in small tracts on long time to settlers. The report is signed by the commissioners: Elwood Mead, chairman; Harris Weinstock, David P. Barrows, Mortimer Fleishacker and Chester Rowell; David N. Morgan, secretary. Copies may be obtained from the secretary of the commission, University of California, Berkeley, California. [See current volume, pages 1138, 1217].

Charges Against Strikers Dropped.

Indictments for murder brought against three leaders of the Mesaba Range iron mine strikers at Virginia, Minnesota, were dismissed on December 18. The men were Carlo Tresca, Sam Scarlett and Joe Schmidt. Two others charged with complicity in the case, Mrs. Phil Masonovitch and John Orlandich, were also dismissed. Three plead guilty to manslaughter. These were Phil Masonovitch, Joe Cernegorovitch and Joe Nikisch. The case grew out of the accidental shooting of an innocent bystander while Masonovitch was resisting an alleged unlawful entry into his house by a deputy sheriff. Tresca, Scarlett and Schmidt were seven miles away at the time, but were indicted, nevertheless. [See current volume, pages 827, 1072.]

Mexico and the United States.

Villa continues active operations at several points in Chihuahua, where he is reported to be in possession of Jiminez and Santa Rosalia. Torreon, which was defended by a small Carranza garrison, has been captured by the Villa forces. It is reported from Mexico City that General Obregon, Minister of War, and General Gonzales are in conference for the purpose of arranging army matters so that General Obregon may take command in the North. It is rumored that General Obregon will take the field in person against Villa at once. [See current volume, page 1218.]

European War.

No decisive action occurred on any of the fronts. Severe weather had delayed action on the Somme and at Verdun so that even heavy artillery was not used until the latter part of the week. Infantry action was confined to small punitive parties. On the Eastern front the Germans have continued slight advances into Wallacia and have pressed the Roumanian and Russian forces in the Dobrudja district to the delta of the Danube and are bombarding both banks of the stream. Action at Monastir has also been delayed on account of severe weather. Greece has apparently come to terms with the Allies and no further friction is

reported in that quarter. Nothing of importance is reported from the Italian front. Reports are given out by London of renewed action on the Tigris River, where they are driving the Turks from some of their positions below Bagdad. El Arish on the Arabian coast ninety miles east of Suez has been captured by the British, who have moved on a few miles beyond. [See current volume, page 1218.]

* *

Peace negotiations have been the dominant note in relation to the war. Lloyd George's speech as Premier in the British House of Parliament in reply to German peace proposals expressed a firm determination to prosecute the war until the Allies should obtain from the Central Powers "complete restitution, full reparation and effectual guarantees." This seems to be the accepted sentiment in Petrograd, Paris and Rome. On the 20th President Wilson's note to the belligerent powers and neutral nations was given to the press. The President disclaimed any relation to the German proposals for peace and expressed no preference and suggested no terms. He realized the embarrassment of making such proposals, but believed that the right of this country as a neutral that had suffered much injury from the war and that might be drawn into the conflict if it were to continue indefinitely. His suggestion is that the belligerent powers make known their demands upon which they would be willing to conclude peace, the understanding being that the minimum requirements be such as will guarantee against a renewal of the war. The President says through Secretary Lansing:

Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this and against aggression of selfish interference of any kind. Each would be jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power amidst multiplying suspicions, but each is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. . . .

* *

The note was received cordially by the Teutonic Allies and quite critically by the Entente Allies. Later comment of the English press indicates growing friendliness, but no official response has yet been made. Press dispatches from Petrograd, Paris and London are still defiant. Switzerland was the first government to take official action. The Swiss Federal Council issued on the 24th a statement to the nations of the world endorsing the action of President Wilson.

It is reported that Holland is on the point of taking similar action, and it is expected that the various neutral countries will follow the lead of the United States.

* * *

I purpose that no man shall drag me down by making me hate him.—Booker T. Washington.

NOTES

—The town of Camas, Wash., elected O. T. Clark, Socialist, Mayor on December 5 over a bi-partisan citizens' candidate.

—To cut down the cost of living the New Orleans Association of Commerce is urging the cultivation of idle lots wherever the owners are willing. The lots are to be turned over to the citizens desiring to cultivate them.

—The value of the exports from New Zealand during the 12 months ended September 30 was £34,613,107. The value during the corresponding period of 1914-15 was £29,346,909. The increase was due to increased prices, rather than to actual expansion of trade.

—Boston went wet by an increased majority on December 19. Last year the vote was for license, 46,118, against license 31,877. This year Billy Sunday was brought to Boston to lead the Dry campaign. The result was for license, 53,431; against license, 30,380.

—By a vote of 58 to 2 the Chicago City Council on December 14 voted to forfeit the plant and franchise of the Automatic Telephone Company. It will be necessary to institute court proceedings to gain possession, however. [See current volume, pages 636, 780, 829, 925.]

—Advocating voluntary co-operation, Francis Neilson will follow his series of addresses on Democracy or Socialism with a debate. The addresses are to be at Willard Hall, beginning January 5, and continued week to week until February 2, under the auspices of the Chicago Rationalist Association.

—Reports of traffic through Sault Ste. Marie Canal for 1916 indicate the largest year's business in the history of the canal. The tonnage amounts to 91,888,219. The largest previous year was 1913, when the tonnage amounted to 79,718,344. The number of vessels using the locks was 25,407. The passengers numbered 54,922.

—Reports to the Interstate Commerce Commission show the net income of the railroads of the United States for the first nine months of the current year to be at least \$785,558,266. This does not represent the full amount, since it only includes returns to those roads whose income exceeds \$1,000,000. The gross income for the roads reported is \$2,654,829,647. At the same ratio the net income for the whole year will be \$1,098,000,000.

—A jury in the federal court at Memphis, Tenn., on December 21 returned a verdict awarding \$22,500 damages to Mathew Harris, a negro, in his suit against former Sheriff John A. Reichman. Harris was injured while resisting forcible entry into his home by a sheriff's posse which was searching for one of his relatives. In charging the jury Judge John E. McCall declared "a man's home is his castle and he has a right to defend it."

—An eight-hour day demanded by the Switchmen's Union of North America was granted by the Federal Arbitration Board at New York City on December 23. The award affects about 9,000 switchmen employed on thirteen Eastern railways. While ostensibly granting the men an eight-hour day and an increase

of five cents an hour to conductors and helpers, the award refuses time and a half for overtime, as demanded, but provides for pro rata pay. This, the men claim, makes possible a day of indefinite length. They will get \$3.60 a day for eight hours or \$4.50 for ten. They now get \$4 for ten hours. [See current volume, page 848.]

PRESS OPINIONS

For Humanity's Sake.

Duluth (Minn.) Herald, December 21.—Some day . . . representatives of the nations now foolishly destroying each other must talk across a table about terms of peace. When President Wilson urges that they do it now, he but speaks the longing of the innermost heart of the world. . . . Unless both sides are blind and besotted, neither can hope for a peace dictated by itself over the prostrate form of the other. . . . The neutral world, which is suffering only less than the belligerents, has a right to make a demand that the contestants state their terms with definite precision, so that the world, belligerent and neutral, may know what the struggle is for. And if, by any chance, compliance with this request proves the two sides not to be as far apart as they suppose themselves to be, thousands of lives and millions of wealth and oceans of woe and misery will be saved. The President's word is timely, and it is uttered as no other living man could have said it.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE DIET SQUAD.

Redkey, Ind., Dec. 10.

An investigation is on to learn how little a human being can eat and retain his life and working strength.

For whose benefit?

That employers and capitalists may learn just how low wages may be forced and how large profits may be extorted? Or is it another scheme of the militarists?

The henequen kings of Yucatan can furnish the facts, if they should be consulted. They can tell how, on one meal of two corn rolls, a small cup of beans, a bit of ill-smelling fish, and a small ball of sour corn dough for a lunch, a sixteen-hour day of hard labor can, for a short time, be ground out of a human being. The Valle Nacional tobacco planters, it is said, can keep a child of Adam alive and at work for seven or eight months on practically nothing.

There are hundreds of thousands of people in the United States who live day after day on less food than can be bought for forty cents. But there is enough in the world to give food and comfort to all if the governments refuse to grant privilege to the few to plunder and rob the many.

Where is a government heading when it is necessary to investigate diets in order to learn how little food can sustain life among the common people, while at the same time the coffers of the money kings are bursting with ill-gotten wealth and a servile press is crying "there is too much gold in America"?

Too much gold and too little food and clothing and comfort for the common run of humanity. Too much preparedness for war and too little for peace. Too big profits for the capitalists, the money lenders and those who thrive on privilege, and too small profits for the laborer, the farmer and the home maker. Too much money for foreign investments and too little for internal improvement. Too much one-sided legislation, too much hypocrisy, too much knavery, too much gold and land and mineral wealth in too few hands.

Hence the dire necessity of an investigation as to how little food one can eat and yet live and work.

G. Q. C.

BOOKS

A GOOD BOOK SPOILED.

The World Decision. By Robert Herrick. Published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., New York. Price \$1.25 net.

This is one of the books that "feel good." The output of the Riverside Press is always that way. Within, there are passages as virile as anything in Carlyle's "French Revolution." The vignettes that Howells has in his "Literature and Life" are not finer than many that Herrick gives us. Wells himself never did anything better than Herrick has in picturing a people beset by a terror, while the "Coming of D'Annunzio" will match for effectiveness the glorious tale of Louis Tournay at the gates of the Bastille.

Then comes the marring of the work. Robert Herrick, enamored of France and Italy, loving the dolce far niente of the South, is filled with hate against Germany and the Germans, and, disregarding economic factors that made this war well nigh unavoidable, blind to fundamental causes, sees nothing but the power of darkness made manifest in the German. By a psychological twist, he has come to regard Germany, France, Italy as fixed entities, and this sadly mars an otherwise magnificent work. A nation cannot in truth be so considered. The people of a country do not think and act en masse. A people has not a fundamental characteristic that impels it as a whole. The Italian is not happy in his poverty, as Mr. Herrick would have us believe. Were he so, there

would be no Italian syndicalists, and anarchists, and socialists, and Singletaxers. The German is not a devouring monster seeking his own good at the expense of others any more than is the Briton. The Frenchman is not a thrifty, self-centered individual seeking a life quiet and undisturbed any more than is the German. Instead, each people is of God's handiwork—men, women and children full of the same ideals according to the individual outlook and aspiration, and the troubles and fears of the one are the troubles and fears of the other; the hope and aim of the one is the hope and aim of the other, and there is a German, and a French, and a Russian, and an Italian Mr. Britling just as there is an English Mr. Britling.

Unfortunately, Mr. Herrick's bias affects his work, his technic. For example, an Italian dirigible "swings lazily in the misty blue sky," but not so a Zeppelin; that being of the Teutons "sneaks across the sky." Giolette also, opposing Italy's participation in the war, standing solidly against her joining the Allies, does not quietly leave town when threatened by the jingoes—instead he "had to sneak out of the city," for Mr. Herrick loves nothing German. So some day Mr. Herrick may read "The World Decision," and, realizing that his antipathy distorted his vision, will regret that thus was marred a magnificent work, for the marring is as marked as it would be in Paderewski's playing, were he to interpolate a ragtime section in the middle of a Chopin ballade.

CHAS. J. FINGER.

PAMPHLETS

Pamphlets Received.

Acrostic Sonnets and Other Poems. By J. E. O'Connor. Published by the author, 1727 Lake street, San Francisco, Calif. 1916.

The Monroe Doctrine and the Program of the League to Enforce Peace. By George Grafton Wilson. Published by the World Peace Foundation, 40 Mt. Vernon street, Boston. 1916.

What Is Christian Social Service? By Bernard Iddings Bell. Published by the Joint Commission on Social Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Church Missions House, New York.

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