

Why Profiteers Knock Secretary Daniels

Secretary Daniels' firm stand against "profiteering" and his refusal to pay exorbitant prices for fuel, steel and other materials and supplies for the navy has resulted in the saving of millions of dollars. Before war was actually declared the navy department got in touch with producers of steel and copper and on April 6 what is known as the "patriotic agreement" was made by which the steel makers agreed to furnish 310,000 tons of steel to the government for \$58 a ton for plates and \$50 a ton for bars and shapes. At that time the prevailing market price was \$25 to \$30 a ton higher than these figures. This meant a saving of more than \$7,500,000 from market prices.

When it was seen later that the government's requirements would far exceed the amount provided for, the situation was discussed at conferences between the secretary of the navy, the secretary of war and the steel manufacturers, resulting in an agreement that government orders would be given precedence over any private contracts or orders and that the price be fixed by the government on the basis of the cost of production plus a reasonable profit.

When the coal operators tendered a price for coal for the navy which he regarded as exorbitant, Secretary Daniels, early in June, ordered coal to be delivered at a tentative price of \$2.335 a ton at the mines, the price finally paid to be fixed, after investigation by the federal trade commission, on the basis of cost of production plus a reasonable profit. The lowest price the operators had offered was \$2.95. As the President has fixed the price at \$2 and the amount needed for the navy is approximately 2,000,000 tons, this means a saving of nearly \$2,000,000 from the lowest price offered by the operators and about \$3,000,000 from the market price of coal at that time, about \$4.50 a ton.

The same policy was pursued in regard to oil, of which the navy uses about 800,000 barrels in a three months' period. The tentative prices Secretary Daniels fixed, \$1.26 at Port Arthur and \$1.08 at San Francisco, represented in the former case a difference of 42 cents a barrel and in the latter 21 cents from the lowest prices offered. Thus the saving in three months' requirements was about \$250,000.

Great difficulty was found in securing additional ship tonnage to provide for the transportation of the oil needed. The rates demanded were very high, \$15 for ocean cargo charter and \$12 for "bare ship" tonnage, when the rates prior to the war were about \$2.50 per ton for the former and 60 to 90 cents for "bare ship" chartering. To relieve the situation the government exercised its authority and requisitioned six tank steamships of an aggregate of 58,239 tons, allowing an advance payment of \$1.75 per ton per month on "bare ship" basis. It is estimated that this will result in a saving of \$596,949 a month from the prevailing prices of tonnage, or \$7,163,397 a year.

The policy the government has adopted of fixing prices for basic materials on the cost of production plus a reasonable profit is fair to the producer and at the same time insures to the government an ample supply of materials needed at prices far below those which previously prevailed in the market.

In the purchase of the vast amount of supplies, clothing, etc., for the navy, there has been the widest competition and every effort has been made to secure the lowest prices possible. The constant aim has been to secure the full worth of every dollar of the immense expenditures necessitated by the war requirements.

The policy of payment on the basis of cost of construction plus a fixed percentage of profit has been instituted in the immense shipbuilding program now under way for the navy, and is working very satisfactorily. New records have been made in construction; the builders have been assured of an ample supply of materials at minimum prices, and the government is securing ships at the lowest cost possible consistent with speedy production under present conditions.

MR. HOOVER AT WORK

The results of Mr. Hoover's work are already apparent.

The price of wheat has been fixed at the central markets, the millers licensed and the amount of wheat they are permitted to buy is to be regulated, and the amount of profit they are to receive per barrel of flour has been fixed at twenty-five cents. The bakers will have to be required to bake a standard sized loaf of bread (which the municipal authorities have the power to do) so as to restore competition among bakers and enable the public to determine what they are paying for bread as compared to the price of wheat and flour. Thus the work of the food administrator proceeds.

It is a reflection on the business ethics and patriotism of some of our business men that the federal government is compelled to step in and prevent the public from being plundered by men who have been able to secure a monopoly on the necessities of life, but it is fortunate that the government sees its duty to the people and is progressive enough to adopt the necessary strong measures to give the people relief. Mr. Hoover has a big job, but he is a big man and is accustomed to handling big problems. He is organizing and directing the governmental machinery to protect the masses. The people are with him, and he will succeed.

BRYAN'S AMERICANISM

A few months ago some people whose principal business in life is "conversation" were very, very busy in condemning the Americanism of William Jennings Bryan and upon it placing the brand of Cain. Their course of conduct arose either from a constitutional and habitual opposition to everything and anything—good as well as indifferent—advocated by Mr. Bryan; or else from an antipathy to Mr. Bryan's well-known preference for peace to war as long as peace could be preserved with honor. Well, war has come and the old-time lingual excoiators of Mr. Bryan still talk on. Like Niagara, their tongues never stop running. But Mr. Bryan has spoken too, and in five minutes he has said more to stir the patriotism of Americans and rally our citizens to their country's colors than all his detractors combined have said or done in the past four months. No finer, no better appeal to the patriotism of the country has been uttered by mortal lips than Mr. Bryan's appeal last week to the people of the nation to stand behind their country in its hour of trial and tribulation, its day of blood and battle. The people with whom abuse of Mr. Bryan has become constant and detestable habit ought to read this patriotic speech by the man from Nebraska and then forever after hold their peace. If every man in the nation were as good an American as William Jennings Bryan, if every man in the country were as good and loyal a citizen as Mr. Bryan, with the public weal as intently at heart and the nation's welfare as keenly sought, this country would be blessed with an impetus toward better things whose results would be beneficial beyond the realms of mere mathematical calculation.—Albany, N. Y., Times-Union.

BRYAN AT HIS BEST

A pleasure to be had in reading William J. Bryan at his best is like the pleasure multitudes of people have had in hearing him at his best, which has been at times when, on a chautauqua circuit, he has used his oratorical gifts talking on questions unrelated to politics. He has made many errors since the war began, but he sees clearly the duty of every American citizen, now that this country has entered the struggle, and he hits boldly at all foes of the flag, no matter with what pretenses they cloak their endeavors to make the war a failure. Two signed articles in the current Commoner deserve wide reproduction. In one "Resisting the Draft," the greatest pacifist of them all when his country was not in war, writes: "The number of those resisting the draft is very small; there should be none * * * War is a last resort—it is a reflection upon civilization that it still reddens the earth—but so long as nations go to war the citizen can not escape a citizen's duty. If his conscience forbids him to do what his government demands, he must submit without complaint to any punishment inflicted whether it be imprisonment or death. This is the best government on earth, the one most responsive to the will of the people, but it is a govern-

ment OF the people. If a few are permitted to resist a law—any law—government becomes a farce. Resistance to law is anarchy."

In an article headed, "Abusing Free Speech," he writes: "Before our nation enters a war it is proper to discuss the wisdom of going to war, but the discussion is closed when congress acts. After that, no one should be permitted to cloak attacks upon government, or aid to the enemy, under the claim that he is exercising freedom of speech. No sympathy can be wasted on those arrested for unpatriotic utterances. They abuse free speech. And this applies to attacks on the allies as well as attacks on the United States. We can no more allow our allies to be crushed than we can afford to be crushed ourselves. The defeat of our allies would throw the whole burden of war upon us. We must stand together and fight it through. There are only two sides to a war. Every American must be on the side of the United States."

These words, in clear, incisive reasoning and perception of truth after the lifting of fogs shows an enemy in view, recall the great speech of Stephen A. Douglas in June, 1861, closing with the words: "It is the duty of every American citizen to rally around the flag of his country."—St. Louis Globe Democrat.

MR. BRYAN'S SUMMARY

In the August number of The Commoner, Mr. Bryan says:

"Before our nation enters a war it is perfectly proper to discuss the wisdom of going to war, but discussion is closed when congress acts. After that, no one should be permitted to cloak attacks upon his government or aid to the enemy under the claim that he is exercising freedom of speech. No sympathy, therefore, will be wasted upon those who have been arrested for unpatriotic utterances. They abuse free speech. And this applies to attacks on the Allies as well as to attacks upon the United States. We can no more allow our allies to be crushed than we can afford to be crushed ourselves. The defeat of our allies would throw the whole burden of the war upon us. We must stand together and fight it through. There are only two sides to a war—every American must be on the side of the United States."

This terse statement, every word of it fraught with meaning, completely clinches the logic of the situation as regards the abuse of free speech. Mr. Bryan sets forth with cogent clarity the vital gist of the whole topic, namely that the time for debate has passed. It was over from the moment this nation entered the war. That is a truth which some actuated by disloyal motives, having obstinately refused to recognize and which others, not meaning to be disloyal, have from lack of clearness of thought—from apparent inability to understand the difference between the privileges of a citizen before war has begun and his obligations in time of war—have failed to comprehend.

But there is no excuse for anyone failing to draw the distinction between the duties of the citizen during war, and the latitude of expression and opinion which is allowed in time of peace. The dividing line is perfectly apparent.

Mr. Bryan has performed a valuable service to the country in stating this distinction with such brevity that it can be carried in every memory and with such clearness that its support must be brought home to every intelligence. "The discussion is closed." That is the sum and substance of the entire matter.—Buffalo, N. Y., Times.

A STRONG APPOINTMENT

Former Representative Victor Murdock, of Kansas, has been selected as a member of the federal trade commission and entered upon the duties of his office September 5. Mr. Murdock is splendidly equipped by education, training and experience to make a valuable member of the commission, and his appointment to the place by President Wilson is particularly pleasing to his many friends throughout the middle west who have a personal knowledge of his ability, integrity and practical progressiveness.

It might be urged in the defense of the middleman that there was only one way open for him to show his willingness to join in the general movement to raise things. People with land could raise crops, and he joined in by raising prices.