

## Compulsory Service on Farms to Prevent Food Famine

The most distressing of all current lunacies is the failure to realize the food situation.

It is evident that the people do not realize the condition, because everybody goes on eating and drinking as usual; and it is evident that the government does not realize the condition, because it goes on doing nothing, as usual.

We must take that back. The government is doing something. It is doing all that can be done to ship out of the country as much as possible can be shipped of our insufficient food reserves.

Even the construction work on our battleships is to be stopped, if certain influences can have their way, in order to hasten and increase the shipments of our food supplies to other countries—or to litter the bottom of the sea, via the submarine route.

Mr. Hoover, who, as head of the American Food Commission, has been in Europe consulting with members of the British, French and Italian cabinets, declares that the allies must lose the war unless we ship them a minimum of 90,000,000 bushels of wheat—in addition to millions of tons of pork, beef, corn, beans and secondary food — during the next four months.

Mr. Hoover points out that this minimum quantity of wheat is twice as much as we have to spare and feed ourselves as usual.

The government of Great Britain had neither the foresight nor the courage to put the people on rations. It tried the Utopian plan of urging voluntary food restrictions. The natural result was that everybody ate all he wanted and expected his neighbor to do without voluntarily—and that is why the government of Great Britain is now begging us to go upon rations to feed a people who would not submit to being rationed themselves.

But to get back to the problem. We have not food enough on hand in this country to last us until the next harvest is ready to eat, five months from now.

England insists that we must ship to her and her allies during that time not less than ten thousand millions of pounds of foodstuffs—which is equivalent to taking 100 pounds of flour, meat, potatoes, beans and milk from every inhabitant of the United States—counting babies with the rest.

And the British demand, besides, that we shall furnish the shipping to carry these vast supplies, stopping our navy building, destroying our vital coastwise commerce and covering the bottom of the sea with the mercantile marine which should be our reliance in the race for the world's trade that will begin the instant the war is over.

We think futility was never more ridiculously in evidence than the scheme suggested by some glittering intellect at Washington, and actually adopted, whereby the submarine blockade was to be overcome by building 3,000 wooden ships of 3,000 tons each—"bridging the Atlantic with one to a mile," as some absurd newspaper naval strategists proudly proclaimed.

After this wonderful scheme had been formally adopted, it occurred to somebody in authority in Washington to make practical inquiries, which

resulted in the discovery that wooden shipbuilding on that scale would require 20,000 ship carpenters and that there were not 5,000 ship carpenters to be had in the whole country.

And far worse than this is the fact that half of the planting season has slipped away and the prospects are that this year's crops will not even equal those of last year, when they should be twice as great merely to keep our people and Europe's people from actual famine.

Instead of drafting 500,000 men for military service and putting them to work on farms, and mobilizing all our available resources in the shape of tractors, farm implements, seed, fertilizers and labor under the organized direction of agricultural experts, ordered into the national service, the food problem has been left to the helpless and utterly useless enthusiasm of individuals or volunteer local associations—all meaning well, and all doing nothing of any earthly value.

We warn the country now, and we warn the government, that if decisive steps are not taken at once to put at least 500,000 men at work under government compulsion and direction within the next six weeks there will not be food enough in this country next September to last through till the next harvests, and the inevitable results will be hunger among the poor and all the disturbances, riots, bloodshed and destruction of property that always occur when thousands are hungry.

We suppose our words are useless. We dare not hope that there is in Washington the statesmanship, or the foresight, or the courage to compel, in time, the production of the food supplies upon which depends the fate of mankind.

But the words must be written, nevertheless.

Neither in conscience nor in duty to God and to the country can we sit mute in the presence of this coming disaster—in the presence of the incredible folly and futility which does nothing to prepare against this coming disaster.—San Francisco Examiner.

### THE MAN WITH THE HOE

The hero of the hour is the man with the hoe. The nation's welfare, perhaps the fate of the nation, or even of the world, may depend upon the man behind the plow as truly as upon the man behind the gun. There is a basis of truth in the idea, and there are limits to it. The fact that agriculture is the one great system of production which depends upon muscle power is worth thinking about. Machinery has been applied to farming, but not power on any great scale. Horses go ahead of the plow as truly as six million farmers go behind it. It takes more land to grow corn and oats and general fodder for a horse than for a man. It is a waste of land to put it to supporting 26,000,000 horses instead of a larger number of men. This country could support men instead of horses if power other than muscle were put ahead of the machines they draw.

The bonanza farms use gasoline mastodons, but the farmer on a small scale sticks to his horse for lack of a gasoline pony. There is no lack of proof of what power can do to relieve the man with the hoe of his

back-breaking, muscle tearing work. We plow, plant, and harvest by machines, but for the most part muscle moves the machines. With oxen farmers scratched the ground. With horses they plow inches deep. Power plows cultivate a foot deep, reaching sources of fertility and moisture in the subsoil which otherwise escape. There is talk of enlisting two million boys for farm work. Even women are liable to be impressed here as they have been in other countries.

No opposition to such proposals should be made. They will do good in supporting themselves even if what they raise never reaches the statistical supply. But in proportion that unaccustomed muscles are put ahead of the farmers' tools, or behind them, the pity grows. Our main reliance must be upon the men accustomed to such work. They should be reinforced with power as well as with tools. The sure proof of it is that the Germans make it their business to destroy all farm tools which fall into their power. Wagons are sawed in two and farm machinery disabled. A farmer who has a tractor commands the power of several horses.

The food agitation suggests further that our farmers are as unorganized as our banks used to be. In foreign countries banks number fewer hundreds than they number thousands with us. But our industries, except farming, are organized in units of a size without parallel except in Germany. Our industrial workers are many, but our industrial companies are few. The suggestion is that our agriculture would benefit by organization as much as by power. The man with the hoe is a poor reliance compared with the farmer with a roll-top desk and capital invested in machinery. That is the way to attack the high cost of living because it is the cheapest way to abundance, and abundance is the greatest enemy of high prices. Time is of the essence of the problem as the planting season wanes. Machinery is a greater saver of time than of labor. The man on a tractor can do more and do it quicker than men with hoes and horses. That is the way the problem is attacked abroad, using our own tractors. Yet those treating our emergency slight the use of machinery in the country where it was invented, and whence it is being exported.—New York Times.

### WOMEN, WAR AND VOTES

Noting the patriotic activity of American women the country over, it is reasonable to assume that the close of the present war will see as great a change in public sentiment toward the question of woman suffrage as Great Britain has experienced. Our government and its supporters, who are so earnestly soliciting the good offices of womankind in the United States, could not with good grace assert that women who are fit to bear the nation's burdens in time of war are not fit to vote in times of peace.

While The Citizen has not always been an advocate of woman suffrage, it saw the justice of women's claims when thousands of the wives, mothers and daughters of England went out into the fields and into the munitions factories in order to serve their country. Indeed, the sorrows and tribulations of the world's greatest war have fallen with crushing weight upon the women of Europe, and when victory finally rests upon the banners of the entente allies, full credit must be, and will be given to them. There has been no "weaker sex" in this war, and we feel sure that when the test comes the women of Amer-

ica will measure favorably with their heroic sisters across the waters.

English statesmen, led by Mr. Asquith, all his life a bitter opponent of woman suffrage, rightfully take the view that the change of public sentiment is not a reward for good behavior, but a course of action based wholly on the palpable injustice of withholding such protection as the vote affords from a sex which for the first time has borne its full share in the great national effort. Short of actually bearing arms in the field, there is hardly a service which has contributed, or is contributing to the success of the allied cause in which women have not been at least as active and efficient as the men. And who can doubt that the daughters of Columbia will not as richly deserve that small measure of recognition which Great Britain is about to bestow?—Asheville (N. C.) Citizen.

### LAY LEADERS

The Kentucky Irish-American republishes a pretended discussion of the report of the Commission on Religious Prejudice. The discussion, written by Father E. A. Flannery of Hazardville Conn., is itself a cause of religious prejudice in so far as it rests on the assumption that a layman is not qualified to speak publicly on what it calls "the religious situation." It deprecates in Col. Callahan "his delusion that he knows more about the religious situation than the clerics." It even insinuates that this layman does not "preserve the faith in all essential elements" when it says: "It is all very well to be at peace with our neighbors, but it is infinitely more important to preserve the faith in all essential elements."

If the report of the Commission on Religious Prejudice does not "preserve the faith in all essential elements," why assail only one member of the commission? Why not blame the whole Order of the Knights of Columbus, which approved the report? The laymen of the Knights of Columbus have no more aim or function to be preservers of "the faith in all essential elements" than did De Maistre Chateaubriand and Montalembert in France, O'Connell in the British parliament and Windhorst in the Reichstag; yet we do not find fault with their public utterances on "the religious situation" in their respective countries.

While looking through the columns of the Kentucky Irish-American for tangible proof against Col. Callahan's orthodoxy, we soon discovered that "the religious situation" is but a plausible side issue with the Kentucky Irish-American, for it fills nineteen of its columns with ads, the remaining nine columns being encumbered with the linotype's cheapest output totally unfit to enlighten Colonel Callahan or any seeker after truth on "the religious situation." What an exalted conception the Kentucky Irish-American has of "the religious situation," may be inferred from the fact that it advertises four breweries and tells the Irish-Americans of Kentucky that "no dinner is complete without beer." "Whose god is their belly; and whose glory is their shame; who mind earthly things."—Phil. 3:19.

By pointing to the liquor traffic as the principal cause of religious prejudice, Col. Callahan diagnoses "the religious situation" better than our astute theological sponsors for the American saloon or their clumsy brewery organs.—From "Catholics and Prohibition."