

Mr. Bryan on Food Conservation

[Abstract of Speech delivered by William Jennings Bryan on Food Conservation at Houston, Texas, Oct. 29, 1917, at the request of Food Commissioner Hoover.]

SITUATION.

Our nation is engaged in the biggest war the world has ever known—biggest in number of men engaged, biggest in killed and wounded, biggest in daily expenditure and in its drain upon the resources of the nations engaged.

Our nation was taken into the war by act of congress, the only body vested with authority to decide such questions. It is, therefore, our war, and the President, acting within his constitutional authority, is now directing the armed forces of the government on land and sea. It is the duty of every citizen to support his government by word and act in every possible way; it is his duty to stand back of the President and congress in whatever they see fit to undertake. We must win the war.

The war calls for men, for money and for food. The men thus far required have been supplied in the way the government prescribed. The money necessary is being furnished, part by taxation and part from loans, the subscriptions being in excess of the amount called for.

Food is the factor which we are assembled to consider tonight. In every war food is a matter of vital importance; in this war it is of more importance than usual because of special conditions that have to be met.

SCARCITY OF FOOD.

Food shortage is due.

First, to a short crop in 1916. The world's production of foodstuffs was below normal last year and, therefore, there was less to carry over, less surplus with which to begin the new year.

Second, there are about forty-million men in arms, a large percentage of them drawn from the food producers in the countries at war.

Third, food carrying ships, to the extent of a million tons in tonnage, have been sunk by submarines since the first day of last February.

Fourth, soldiers drawn from lighter employment to the hardships of war require more food than they did in time of peace; and women workers who are now taking the place of men drawn from industry into the army, need more food than when employed at their usual work.

Just when the world needs more food and better food than ever before it finds it difficult to produce as much as formerly, and the burden falls most heavily upon the poor and the weak. The rich can purchase food even at high prices, and the government can supply the army at any cost. Food shortage, therefore, will be felt most severely by those least able to buy, especially by the infirm and the young.

We are impelled, therefore, by sympathy as well as by a sense of duty, to make the best of the situation and to protect our own people and those who are making this fight with us, by increasing as far as we can the supply of food in this country and by conserving the supply by wise use of that which is produced. Secretary Houston of the agricultural department has from the time of our entrance into the war, emphasized the importance of bringing production to the maximum and of reducing waste to a minimum.

The principal remedies are:

First—Increased efficiency, to be secured by better organization and co-operation among producers.

Second—An increase in the number of laborers, the child group being the largest from which recruits can be drawn. Several hundred thousand boys and girls have been brought together into corn clubs, poultry clubs, calf clubs, pig clubs, canning clubs, etc., and encouraged by rivalry. This is not only valuable because of its addition to the total food product but to the children it is a lesson in practical patriotism.

Third—Legislation has been resorted to for the restraint of those who attempt to take advantage of the nation's necessities and for the encouragement of those engaged in productive work. Further legislation is possible, such as

temporary suspension of laws against the raising of pigs and poultry in cities, so that these industries can be carried on under such supervision as may be necessary for the protection of public health.

Fourth—The saving of the food wasted, estimated at \$700,000,000 a year, is being urged by personal appeals to the homes of the land.

Fifth—It is estimated that foodstuffs to the value of \$145,000,000 per year have been converted into alcoholic liquors during the recent past. One-third of this is to be saved by prohibiting the manufacture of whiskey during the war. The remaining two-thirds can be saved for food by similar legislation prohibiting the conversion of foodstuffs into beer. Grapes heretofore used in the making of wine can be utilized for the making of sugar.

The food propaganda must be carried on by a patriotic appeal to the entire public and its success will be measured by the voluntary response to this appeal.

At this crisis the President has been fortunate in finding a "man of the hour" in Mr. Herbert Hoover, who has shown himself possessed of rare executive ability and who has been prepared for his present work by the experience which he had in Great Britain during the early years of the war.

His plan, though comprehensive, is easily understood, his arguments are unanswerable, and his unselfish devotion to the work awakens the zeal of those to whom he is addressing himself.

He is a master of organization and the apostle of co-operation. He understands how to weld individual units into a mighty army and how to impress them with the importance of the individual's part by dividing the work to be done. The success of the Liberty Bond loans has shown the advantage of assigning to each community its proportion of the work. Mr. Hoover carries the plan a step farther and assigns to each family a task.

One illustration will show how co-operation multiplies results. If all the people living on the globe had walked single file across the Isthmus of Panama it would never have occurred to any one of them to attempt the building of the canal alone, but forty-thousand men organized and acting together, placed to the credit of the United States this greatest engineering feat in history. So the citizens of the United States, acting together and under wise guidance will be able to accomplish what the units, acting alone, would never have thought of undertaking.

Mr. Hoover does not ask the American people to starve themselves, or to suffer privation; he points out that there is food enough for all if it is used wisely and without waste. The following are a few of the plain and simple rules which will solve the problem and enable us to do our share in the feeding of the army without bringing suffering upon those at home.

First—Substitute vegetables and fruits for meats as far as possible, and thus save the meats for those who need the stronger foods.

Second—Substitute perishable vegetables and fruits wherever it can be done, for the non-perishable forms of food, and thus take the strain off the more permanent foods.

Third—Wherever it can be done, use food produced locally rather than food brought from a distance and thus take the strain off the railroads.

Fourth—For wheat use corn, rice, rye, oats and barley and thus leave a larger surplus of wheat for export. A saving of one-fifth of the wheat consumed in this country will enable us to increase our export of wheat to the amount desired. We have corn in abundance and it is better used here than exported because the people of other countries are not so accustomed to it as a food and have not the machinery necessary for converting it into meal. Meal can not be shipped as safely as flour, it does not keep so well.

Fifth—For meat substitute fish and fowl—the obligation to use fish is greater along the sea coast and by the rivers where fresh fish can be had daily, while the obligation to use fowls is the greater in the interior where poultry is plentiful.

Sixth—For animal fats substitute as far as possible vegetable oils. The demand for dairy products has largely increased and we are in position to economize in this form of food.

Seventh—More sugar is needed by our allies, the source of their supply having been cut off. Sugar is a food which we can dispense with with

less sacrifice than wheat, meat or the fats. Those who served in the armies of the Civil war learned that when necessary it could be dispensed with entirely in coffee and in bread. To a moderate extent saccharine may be substituted for sweetening.

If the twenty-two million families in the United States will make a systematic effort to follow the advice that comes from Washington we shall be able to do our part. An average reduction of one ounce of meat per person per day will enable us to make the desired increase in meat exports. If part of our days are wheatless, part meatless and part sugarless we shall without suffering ourselves, be able to contribute to the strength and effectiveness of those who bear for us the burdens of the war.

Pledge cards will be offered to every household—there should be no failure to enlist in this mighty army which will help to win the war. The house cards that will be supplied will furnish all the information necessary to enable each housewife to understand what she is asked to do for the country, and why she is asked to do it.

Food conservation is the lightest burden imposed by the war. As long as it is necessary for one soldier boy to offer his life upon his country's altar, no amount of money collected on incomes, on property or through loans can compare with the tax laid on blood. Saving food by substitution is still easier.

It is inconceivable, therefore, that the response should be less than unanimous. Patriotism is a universal and continuing virtue. Though more apparent in time of war it is none the less present in time of peace. As invisible ink can be made visible, so the word "Patriot," written upon every American heart, however invisible in ordinary times, is brought out by any emergency which, like war, tests the quality of our citizenship.

The response to Mr. Hoover's appeal should come immediately and from every section.

The President has described this war as a war "to make democracy safe" throughout the world and it is our hope that the treaty of peace, when signed, will sound the death knell of autocracy on God's footstool. But this is more than an attack upon autocracy in Germany—it is a test of democracy in the United States. Autocracy claims that it can more completely than democracy, consolidate and command the forces of the country. It is its boast that it can not only hurl its legions against the foe but that it can also coerce its people at home into doing everything necessary for the success of the military power. I have such faith in democracy, in war as well as in peace, that I believe that our people will do, without compulsion, all that the subjects of a monarchy will do under compulsion. We ought to do more. As American citizenship carries with it more of blessings than citizenship in any other land, our people should not only willingly, but even gladly, endure more than the citizens of any other nation to make sure that the blessings of our government may descend unimpaired to children and to children's children.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

The following notice appeared in the last issue of the Amethyst:

"Heart to Heart Appeals" is the title of a volume of extracts from the speeches of Hon. W. J. Bryan covering a period of twenty-five years.

"It is characteristically reverent, beautiful, suggesting and inspiring. The selections cover such a wide range of subjects and are made with such taste and discrimination that the book is an ideal gift for a pastor, college or high school student or for any one who is capable of appreciating the noble thoughts and high ideals. It is published by F. H. Revell, Chicago and New York, at \$1.00."

(An extended announcement of "Heart to Heart Appeals" may be found on another page.—Ed.)

One of the magazines prints a piece to prove that Colonel Edward M. House, the President's friend, is not a mystery at all. Every now and then you find chaps who are just as big blunders as the lawyer's son who settled the lawsuit between members of a family, a suit that had sent the young man through school. For three years now it has been a standing order in all newspaper and magazine offices, when things got dull and ideas ran short, to toss together another story about the "mysterious" Colonel House.