

# Summary of Work of Congress at Extra Session

[From the Official Bulletin, Oct. 15.]

An official compilation issued by the document room of the house of representatives shows that out of 91 laws enacted by the extraordinary session of the Sixty-fifth congress recently adjourned 56 related in one way or another to the national defense and preparation for the prosecution of the war against Germany. Some of these 56 bills relate to minor matters, but all had a bearing in varying degrees upon the efficiency of the national defense.

The extraordinary session sat for 188 days. In the senate during that time more than 10,000 army, navy and marine corps nominations were confirmed. The appropriations for the present fiscal year, including contract authorizations for the same period, reached a total of \$21,390,000,000. This total includes \$7,000,000,000 in loans to the allies. In round numbers the authorizations of funds appropriated were as follows: Army, \$8,911,000,000; navy, \$1,875,000,000; merchant shipping fleet, \$1,889,000,000; loans to allies, \$7,000,000,000; defense fund for the President, \$100,000,000; food and fuel control, \$173,000,000; soldiers' and sailors' insurance, \$176,000,000; interest on bonds and certificates, \$200,000,000; civil establishment, \$958,000,000; all other expenses, \$102,000,000.

### Passage of War Resolution.

The war legislation began with the passage by the senate, April 4 last, and by the house, April 6, of the joint resolution declaring that a state of war existed between the United States and Germany and the approval of the resolution by the President immediately upon its enrollment. The session adjourned on October 6, on which day the President signed various war measures, among them the \$5,356,666,016 deficiency appropriation bill.

The various appropriation bills were enacted from time to time throughout the session. The second joint resolution to be passed was that of May 12, under which the German ships in the ports of this country were seized and taken over for the use of the government. Then followed various resolutions relating to the rights of retired officers when detailed to active duty; to the officers of the public health service serving on coast-guard vessels or detailed for duty with the army or navy, and the pensionable status of themselves or their dependents; to relieve the owners of mining claims who have entered the service from performing assessment work during such military service.

### Selective Service Law.

By way of preparing for additional naval officers, on April 25 an act was approved authorizing one additional midshipman for each senator, representative, and delegate in congress. On the same day the maximum limit of age for officers of the naval reserve on first appointment was increased from 35 to 50 years.

The next war legislation was the selective service law, approved by the President May 18, under which a selected army of 1,000,000 men was provided for and other legislative features pertaining to the army enacted. This was followed, on May 22, with legislation to increase the strength of the navy and the marine corps—in the case of the navy from \$7,000 to 150,000, and in the case of the marine corps from 17,400 to

30,000. On May 29 an act was approved giving the interstate commerce commission additional power with respect to car service, and on August 9 the act to increase the membership of the commission, and a day later the act authorizing priority of shipments by any common carrier. The war-risk act was amended and enlarged under the act of June 12, which also carried an appropriation of \$45,150,000 to insure vessels and their cargoes and the masters, officers, and crews.

### The Espionage Law

Two days later, on June 14, the act was approved authorizing the issue to states and territories and the District of Columbia of rifles and other property for the equipment of organizations of home guards. The espionage bill became a law with the approval of the President on June 15, and provision was made under it to punish acts of interference with foreign relations, the neutrality, and the commerce of the United States; to punish espionage and better enforce the criminal laws of the United States; and for other purposes. On July 2 authority was given the secretary of war to obtain possession of whatever land might be needed as sites for the construction or prosecution of works for fortifications, coast defenses, and military training camps.

On July 24 the President approved the bill to increase the signal corps of the army and appropriating \$640,000,000 for the purchase, manufacture, maintenance, repair, and operation of airships. On October 1 the aircraft board bill became a law through Executive approval. Its function is to supervise and direct, under the direction and control of the secretaries of war and the navy, the development of the aircraft service of the United States.

Under the act of August 10, congress appropriated \$11,346,400 to provide further for the national security and defense by stimulating agriculture and facilitating the distribution of agricultural products. Under the food-control bill approved the same day an appropriation was carried amounting to \$162,500,000, to provide for the national security and defense by encouraging the production, conserving the supply, and controlling the distribution of food products and fuel.

The trading-with-the-enemy act, which was adopted late in the session, defines, regulates, and punishes trading with the enemy.

One of the last acts of the session was the soldiers' and sailors' insurance bill. It provides a military and naval family allowance, compensation, and insurance fund for the benefit of soldiers and sailors and their families and makes an appropriation for this purpose of \$176,250,000. Widows of soldiers of the Civil and the Spanish-American wars are given a monthly pension of \$25.

Other legislation of the recent session, of minor character, but relating to the war, includes these laws: Assignment of fleet naval reserve to active duty; extension of minority enlistments, naval service; authority for additional officers, hydrographic office of the navy; relating to foreign enlistments in the United States; relating to enlistments in the naval reserve corps; amending the federal reserve act; authority for construction of various temporary buildings for departments and a permanent annex for

the treasury department; providing for the repatriation of citizens in the armies of the allies; regulating the use of explosives during the war; for the reimbursement of officers and enlisted men of the navy for personal property lost while on duty; permitting foreign ships to engage in the coastwise trade during the period of the war and for 120 days thereafter; providing for six months' gratuity to dependents of deceased sailors; providing commissions in the army staff corps and removing the age limits of reserve corps officers requiring discharge; extending liquor and immorality sections of army draft law to the navy; prescribing courtmartial procedure in the navy; providing for the appointment of 20 chaplains at large in the army; prohibiting the publication of inventions of value to the enemy; increasing the commutation price for rations in the navy to 40 cents.

### Dates of Principal Laws

The principal measures of the congress became laws by the approval of the President on the following dates: First authorization of issue of Liberty Bonds and loan to the allies, April 24; first appropriation for the support of the army carrying \$273,046,322, May 12; selective draft bill, May 18; increasing the strength of the navy and marine corps, May 22; espionage bill, June 15, appropriation of \$3,281,094,541 for the military and naval establishment, June 15; \$640,000,000 aircraft bill, July 24; food survey and food control bills, August 10; second Liberty Bond issue and further loans to the allies, September 24; the war tax revenue act, October 3; trading-with-the-enemy act, October 6; soldiers' and sailors' insurance act, October 6; urgent deficiency act carrying \$5,356,666,016 for war expenses, the greatest single budget in the history of any government, October 6.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

A Prayer Book for the Public and Private Use of Our Soldiers and Sailors, with Bible Readings and Hymns. Bishop White Prayer Book Society, 533 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

My Four Years in Germany. By James W. Gerard, late ambassador to the German Imperial Court. George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York. Price \$2.00, net.

To All the World (Except Germany). By Arthur Edward Stillwell, author of "Universal Peace-War is Mesmerism," etc. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W. C., London, England.

American Indian Corn. (Maize.) A Cheap, Wholesome, and Nutritious Food. 150 Ways to Prepare and Cook It. By Charles J. Murphy, formerly commissioner for the state of Nebraska. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. Price 75c.

American Presidents. Their Individualities and Their Contributions to American Progress. By Thomas Francis Moran, Ph.D., professor of history and economics in Purdue university. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Publishers, New York. Price 75 cents, net.

The Coming of the Dawn. By Jane A. Pierson. The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, O. \$1.50 postpaid.

Between the Upper and the Nether Mill-Stones. By "A. B. C." Old Corner Bookstore, 27 Bromfield St., Boston, Mass.

The History of the Fall and Dissolution of Christendom. By Dr. J. E. Thompson. The Public Distribution Company, 417 1/2 Church St., Nashville, Tenn. Price \$1.50.

The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems. By Vachel Lindsay. The

MacMillan Company, Publishers, New York. Price \$1.25.

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