

Putting the Impress of Thrift Upon Our Nation's Wasters

Special Correspondence
WASHINGTON, D. C.

M. VICTOR BORET, the French minister of food, in a recent interview, said: "The allies will owe a debt of gratitude to two men after the victory has been obtained. First, to the general who leads the soldiers to win the decisive battle. Second, to Herbert Hoover, who rendered it possible for the soldiers to eat so that they might fight."

And a distinguished American said: "Herbert Hoover has taken a nation of wasters and put the impress of thrift upon it."

Into these two short paragraphs is condensed the story of a great achievement; the accomplishment in one year of a work that would be monumental as the life work of any man. He has made possible the winning of the greatest war of all time, and as a byproduct to the doing of it he has conferred on a hundred million people a great and lasting benefit.

The impress of thrift put upon a hundred million wasters! No man has vision great enough to estimate what that will mean in the years to come. Generations of Americans yet unborn will reap the major benefits but it means so much to the generation which is here today that volumes might be written on it.

It generally is agreed that the end of the great war will mark the beginning of the greatest commercial struggle in the history of the world. Had America remained a nation of food wasters the handicap would have offset, perhaps more than offset, natural advantages which this country possesses. That impress of thrift may well prove the weapon which will win America from defeat on the great battlefield of trade.

Americans became a nation of food wasters because food was overabundant and, therefore, cheap. Food never again will be overabundant, and it never again will be cheap, as it was cheap when the wasting habit was formed. Eventually, America would have been forced to learn that lesson of thrift, but it would have taken many



MISS GERTRUDE B. LANE.
Manager of a campaign of education in household economics, which has revolutionized home cooking in America.
(Photo from Food Administration.)



DR. RAY LYMAN WILBUR.
Who organized the great food conservation movement.
(Photo by Clinebinder.)

years and the price would have been want and suffering and social unrest and lost opportunities. A single year of war and of Hoover has accomplished it.

That the lesson has been learned is attested by the fact that today the American people are eating only 40 per cent as much wheat as they ate in the days before the war—and they are doing it without complaint, without hardship and without any real incoherence. And, above all other things, they are in the main doing it voluntarily. Any autocratic government that attempted to force so radical a change in the eating habits of a people in so short a time would be confronted by a three-toppling revolution.

Curtailed in the use of wheat is greater today, of course, than it has been at any time in the past, but since the last crop was harvested the American people, by practicing conservation, have saved enough wheat to supply more than 20,000,000 people with bread for a like period. In other words, each American family of three persons, by practicing conservation, has made it possible for one person in Europe to eat bread who could not otherwise have had it.

That is a pretty satisfying reward for the amount of self-denial involved, but it is only a part of the story.

The 1917 harvest of wheat in the United States was short many millions of bushels; one of the poorest crops, in fact, of recent years. On the basis of normal consumption in this country there was an exportable surplus of only about 25,000,000 bushels. But consumption in this country has not been on a normal basis. The American people have been Hooverizing. As a result, to June 1 the United States had been able to export 125,000,000 bushels of wheat, and more than 20,000,000 bushels of wheat before the new crop is harvested—a saving through conservation of 125,000,000 bushels of wheat. That is a peck for each man, woman and child in America. Four and one-half bushels of wheat make a barrel of flour. It figures out, therefore, that since the first of last August each American family of seven persons has

cattle in Belgium and practically all in the occupied portions of northern France, carried off or killed by the Germans. Because of the terror under which the mothers of these children live, the average period of breast feeding was under four months. Then it was a question of condensed milk, starvation in northern France, especially, there has been scarcely a child born since the German invasion, whose continued life has not been dependent upon condensed milk from America. Export of condensed milk from the United States has increased from a pre-war yearly average of about 400,000 pounds to a present yearly average of nearly 30,000,000 pounds. Shipments of condensed milk alone have absolutely meant salvation of the race to the peoples at war against Germany.

These figures tell only a part of the story of what operation of the United States Food Administration has meant to the peoples of the allied countries of Europe. And the benefits to them have been benefits also to us, for their war is our war and if they perish we must battle the Hun alone. "It would be worse than folly," said Mr. Hoover in a recent address, "to put five million of our citizens into France if the civilian population of our allies are not to be maintained in strength and morale with our food."

Collateral benefits have come to the American people which are great beyond reckoning. Complaint is heard now and then because the food administration has not brought about greater reductions in prices. Prices are not the end, but the primary purpose in creation of the food administration, but its accomplishment in the way of prevention of inflation have saved the American people many hundreds of millions of dollars in every reason to be named. That inflation of prices against Germany on April 6, last year, food prices, already high, took a sharp upward turn, and by May 15, the date of the application of the food control law, wheat was selling at \$17 a barrel, with prospect that it soon would go to \$25, and other commodities were jumping daily to keep up with it.

When Mr. Hoover was appointed he had no authority of law back of him, and did not have until the food control bill was passed in August. Whatever he accomplished had to be through voluntary co-operation. His first act, after addressing an appeal to the women of America to conserve food, was to call the grain dealers of the country to Washington for a conference. He asked the grain men, as an act of patriotism, to stop all speculation in wheat. They agreed, and the food panic was at an end. Inflation was brought to an abrupt halt, and since that time prices of foodstuffs, taken as a whole, have been held fairly level. On the foods most essential to human life prices are lower today than they were a year ago. Flour, for example, is selling for about 11 a barrel, as against \$17. That inflation of prices should have been halted, and the cost of living actually reduced, is something absolutely unprecedented in the history of war.

The only money available for organization of the food administration until after the food control law was passed was set aside by the President for the emergency war fund, and every dollar had to be made to count. Mr. Hoover served, and continues to serve, as a volunteer, and many of the men and women who have come to assist him also are volunteer workers.

That of these patriotic men and women is a long one, and the fact that all cannot be mentioned here is no reflection on the important contribution they have made to a great accomplishment. Among the Hoover staff, however, are two men and two women who have done work, the results of which have been felt in every American household, but

BEN S. ALLEN.
Director of the education division, who has conducted the greatest publicity campaign in the history of America.



HERBERT HOOVER.
Who has kept their personalities in the background.

Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur left his duties as president of Leland Stanford University to organize the great campaign for food conservation. He had to build from the ground up. There were no precedents, and there was no authority to enforce the saving of a slice of bread or an ounce of meat. Everything had to be accomplished through voluntary co-operation. The results of that campaign are to be measured in the wheat and meat, sugar and fats which the American people have refrained during the last year from eating.

Miss Sarah Field Splint, editor of a woman's magazine, is undertaking to persuade American housewives to sign the food pledge card and enroll themselves as members of the food administration. More than thirteen million of them are enrolled today, the greatest organization of women the world has ever known. Other great organizations have been effected, such as that of the hotel and restaurant industry, the conservation of food, but all their accomplishments are dwarfed by the great thing which has been done by American housewives.

Once these women were organized they had to be told what to do and how to do it. It was announced that the fundamental principle by Mr. Hoover and the food administration that in saving food for shipment overseas, American families was to go underfed or undernourished. American women, therefore, had to be taught how ad-

quately to feed their families with few quantities of food. Miss Gertrude B. Lane, also a magazine editor, was called upon to make a campaign of education in household economics, and as a result of the work she has done the dietary of the American people has been revolutionized. Recipes for preparing all sorts of appetizing and nourishing dishes have been sent out by her division and published in thousands of newspapers and magazines. This campaign has had two objectives. One has been to save the foods essential to the winning of the war, and the other has been to "put the impress of thrift upon our nation's wasters." American women understand today as they never understood before the nutritive values of foods and their relations to one another, and it is safe to say that the American people never again will eat as heedlessly or as extravagantly as they ate in the past.

At the head of all the educational and publicity work has been Ben S. Allen, trained newspaper man, who resigned his position with the London bureau of the Associated Press to accompany Mr. Hoover to Belgium when the latter undertook the work of Belgian relief. From that day until he broke down a few weeks ago from overwork, he had been Mr. Hoover's right-hand man and chief lieutenant.

By those competent to judge, Mr. Allen is credited with having conducted the greatest and most successful publicity campaign ever undertaken. Day by day, week by week and month by month thousands of newspapers and magazines have published the stories coming from his office, and they have published them solely because of their value as news or feature matter. No newspaper or magazine has been paid for a single line of advertising space.

And what is true of the educational and publicity work of the food administration has been true of all of its activities. In these days when millions of dollars are being taken from the Treasury it has been almost parsimonious in its expenditures. The entire cost of "making it possible for the soldiers of the world to eat so that they might fight" and of "putting the impress of thrift upon a nation of wasters" has not exceeded to each American citizen the equivalent of a three-cent postage stamp.

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MISS SARAH FIELD SPLINT.
Head of the home conservation division, who persuaded more than thirteen million women to become members of the United States Food Administration.
(Photo from Food Administration.)

American Red Cross Will Send Letters Into Enemy Countries

Special Correspondence
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE American Red Cross as the result of a request from the United States government, has established a bureau of communication for the benefit of persons in this country and those in the several countries of the enemy who have for a number of months been deprived of that privilege. W. R. Castle has been made head of the new work, and he is enthusiastic over the service. He has felt that just such work as the bureau has recently taken up has been needed ever since the outbreak of the war.

Suppose, through illness or other misfortune, one had friends stranded in an enemy country at the beginning of world hostilities. Of course, one's first impulse would be to get in touch with these unlucky ones and, naturally, an anxious letter would be hurriedly written and dispatched. But the writer, all in good time, is told that no such letters are en route because the censor is in possession of the mail and will not be for an indefinite period. Imagine the utter consternation and amazed incredulity! But the entire ease with which these facts are verified substantiates each statement.

When the United States broke with Germany diplomatically, rumors of countless unbelievable things filled the air, and there was the possibility of severing all communication by post in case of war. Many persons doubted that this would actually be done even if war were declared. But swiftly upon the heels of the diplomatic break came the declaration of war, and immediately the postal service between this country and Germany came to an end.

communication between the United States and Germany brooked no denial. It seemed to them that a very unnecessary trial had been inflicted upon them.

But there was but one chance of important messages reaching those on the other side who were confined within the territorial lines of the enemy. This was by means of neutral countries. Letters might first be sent to a neutral country and from there to the address in Germany. This method was far less direct and consumed a little more time than the direct method, but it could not be denied. The chance of loss and other mishaps were proportionately increased and these missives were always subject to the check of the censor or British censor, providing they got that far. On the whole, communication of this sort was neither so certain nor so prompt as the majority of those who were forced to resort to the method, in desperation, had hoped for.

There was but one exception to this new ruling, and that was relative to prisoners of war. According to international law, communication with prisoners of war is permissible. Were it not for this many a war prisoner would, indeed, languish and despair, but each black day which stretches itself before him is forever lightened a little by the hope of letters from home. Letters to Americans who are now prisoners behind the German lines can be sent to these men without postage, and every effort will be made to deliver them.

circumstances, it is possible to get in the middle of April to various chapters of the Red Cross. So at this time the plan is just getting well under way.

All those who wish to send a message from this country to a soldier, sailor or airman in an enemy country must get in touch with his local Red Cross branch or office. It is for the purpose of this "Yes" or "No." The British government, for instance, when confronted with "Do you allow any communication between the people of England and Germany?" would reply, "No."

Conditions in this country today are markedly different from those existing in countries of the other allies. It is for the purpose of this "Yes" or "No." The British government, for instance, when confronted with "Do you allow any communication between the people of England and Germany?" would reply, "No."

As a result of this measure, not a scattered few, but many hundreds of men and women found themselves entirely unable to get the most vital personal messages through to relatives and friends situated within the boundaries of enemy territory. It was quite in vain that they made their pleas to the government. Uncle Sam was deaf to all entreaty, because it was then a well known fact that the German system of censorship had reached the high-water mark of perfection, and it was thought wiser to close on the side of severity rather than on that of leniency.

No one knew positively that the most innocuous-sounding of personal messages might not be written and censored to a Hun code and laden with hidden meaning from which the trained spy could glean the most carefully guarded military secret. Uncle Sam cared to take no chances. He could not afford risks of that sort. Yet, in spite of this, the fact that there were many loyal American citizens who were greatly distressed because of the interrupted communication

Otherwise international law opposes the conveyance of the most purely personal messages between fighting nations. However, the practice of communication has become a custom which has generally received international respect. In fact, during the present war the United States is said to be the only nation which ever put this practice outside of the law. There are government authorities who realize that this legislation causes real suffering among their own people. There are countless numbers of naturalized Americans who earnestly long to send news to people in the enemy territory. German-Americans were prevented from making the most innocent inquiries respecting citizens in the enemy territory.

Some authorities further contended that in spite of the stringency of this law and in spite of the many hardships it imposed it only theoretically

Nevertheless, it has been ascertained persons in England connive at this practice. English censors can very capably manage whatever mail of this kind passes through their hands. American censors, however, are overwhelmed with their task, so gigantic would it prove to be. Indeed, it could not be done with any great degree of thoroughness or efficiency.

It is just here that the Red Cross has come to fill the breach and solve the riddle. A great organization like the Red Cross can arrange to send mail through neutral countries and into enemy countries with more speed and fewer difficulties than those attendant upon individuals, even were they allowed the practice. The plan placed in him a message that is reliable, and is known among his fellows as such, the fact is more than likely to be known by a chaplain or two, and this will suffice. If he is a comparative stranger in the community, or for some reason he is too obscure to be known to any Red Cross

TROUBLES AND HUMORS OF FOOD SHORTAGE IN ROME

ROME. — THE value of time lost in looking for articles to eat and wear is one of the new elements that has come to be counted in connection with the high cost of living in Italy, according to Food Controller Dr. Silvio Crespi.

Practically every member of every household now spends several hours each day in searching for butter, sugar, firewood, coal, coal oil or clothing needed at home. Those persons who have servants have been compelled either to increase their number of servants or to do part of the servants' work while the latter runs from store to store attempting to locate articles absolutely required to keep the household going.

The question of high prices, which was long a disturbing factor, has been supplanted by the problem of where to exist everywhere a scarcity of carpets, table linen, dishes, kitchen utensils, shoes that fit, men's collars and every article that can be named.

In Rome, the capital city, heads of families, whether ambassadors, ministers, clerks, doctors or cooks, are now compelled to occupy themselves with the problem of scarcity. The most pathetic appeals from people who declare their loyalty to the United States, but at the same time are greatly perturbed because they have been unable heretofore to get so much as a line through to some very dear friend or relative in one of the countries of the enemy.

There was the case of a Serbian officer who had been sent to this country to get recruits. For many months he had been unable to get in touch with his family in Serbia. Naturally, his anxiety was extreme. Hearing of this new work which the Red Cross had recently begun, he visited headquarters and to the bureau of communication related his story and told of his hopes and his fears in regard to the lost family.

The Red Cross pledged him its word to do everything in its power to get some trace of the family. Immediately through Switzerland, inquiries were started. The work took time and to the waiting man so eager for news affairs seemed to move with agonizing slowness. It was only two months the Red Cross was able to give him news of his family's health and whereabouts. Again, here is the story of Thomas Hitchcock, a young American aviator whose plane crossed over the enemy lines and failed to come back. After a time his worried father made urgent inquiries of the State Department and endeavored also to obtain news through Spain. But it was the Red Cross, working through the German Red Cross, that gave him the news of his son, who was held in a German prison camp. From two weeks to six months in usualy required to get news of missing men.

around to the food problem, and let it be known that those who were in the land which included all the Navy officers' households. As the officer in command of the rice ship didn't appear to take the hint, the man from the naval attaché's office expatriated on the condition of the children of the various warships. He hadn't had any rice for weeks. Thereupon the rice ship's commander sent off, very sorry, but that his orders had been to deliver a complete load of rice and he couldn't possibly make any inroads upon it. Orders were orders.

The loss of time consequent upon filling out food cards and coal cards and rice and macaroni cards has been such, with the loss of time to make after the provisions which the cards call for, but don't deliver, that many classes of persons have joined cooperative associations or formed new ones.

One such co-operative association is that formed by the newspaper men. This co-operative has its own store, where rice, macaroni, sugar, coal, chestnuts, and such like other groceries may be obtained by members.

The government decrees regarding the use of gas in particular have proved expensive to many as regards heating. Early in the winter it was known that there would be little coal or wood available, except at high prices, so many families put in for gas stoves for heating, since many of the municipalities have so far been able to supply gas at prices comparatively reasonable.

Then came a decree that gas heating would not be permitted, as there was barely enough gas for cooking purposes. Those who had the gas stoves to spare in desperation bought kerosene oil stoves, despite the disagreeable odor of the oil, but their problem is to obtain oil to keep the stoves going. The oil is selling for 45 cents a quart—when there is any.

Strange obsessions result from the constant out for occasions by the food search. Persons who never cared much for candies or tobacco and their kindred pleasures, are now buying articles. Although candies are made, not of sugar, butter, eggs, flour and the usual essence, but of honey, saccharine, corn meal, prunes, nuts and other materials capable of being pushed together, the demand for such candies is abnormal, according to published statistics, with the price at \$1 to \$1.50 the pound.

It has been noted repeatedly that never have people worn such fine shoes or paid so much attention to footgear as these winter months. The price of shoes formerly wore low about the year around, as they were able to do because of the mild climate, now want shoes with leather tops reaching half way up the calf.