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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FIRST WAR CONGRESS

Senator Chamberlain Reviews Work of Last Congress and Says That Criticism Is Unjustified—Country Unprepared for War When the Congress Met and When It Adjourned War Machinery Was Working Well

By P. H. MCGOWAN.

Washington, Nov. 24.—The accomplishments of the first war congress have been summarized by Senator George E. Chamberlain, of Oregon, chairman of the senate committee on military affairs, in the following statement:

"It may be stated without qualification that no congress since the adoption of the constitution has such a record of accomplishment as has the first session of the Sixty-fifth congress—the first war congress. This statement has particularly to do with legislation that has been made necessary for placing the country in a proper attitude for a defensive as well as for an offensive war."

"On the second day of April, 1917, the president delivered his message to congress calling attention to the fact that America because of the attitude which the imperial German government had assumed was already in a state of war, and advising as to the needs of the country for bringing the war to a successful conclusion. On the fifth day of the same month congress adopted a resolution declaring that a state of war existed, and on the next day the president's proclamation of war was issued."

"With the exception of a few laws which were passed during the preceding session providing for a reorganization of the army and an increase of the navy in the number of battleships and in the personnel as well, America was practically unprepared to play its part in the greatest war of history. Immediately, however, upon the issuance of the president's proclamation and as soon as the needs of the country were brought to the attention of congress legislation began to be formulated, discussed, and enacted which the crisis demanded."

Criticism Unjustified.
"There has been a disposition in some quarters to criticize congressional action and to charge dilatoriness upon the part of the administration. Such criticism was and is wholly unjustified, however much merited might be a criticism that congress had acted with too much haste. For between the declaration of war and the adjournment of congress everything was done which seemed to be necessary in order that America might play her part in an international cataclysm."

"It would be impossible in a short statement to go into details with reference to legislation which has been enacted, but it is proper to call attention to a few of the most salient measures. First of all as an efficient measure for raising an army the selection draft law easily occupies the first place. The draft was urged by Washington and his generals as necessary to the successful carrying on of the Revolutionary war, and a reluctant congress finally enacted such a law without the power to enforce it, and one of the first acts of congress under the constitution was the compulsory service law of 1792, which remained on the statute books until its repeal by the so-called Dick law in 1903. That act was impracticable and unsuited to modern conditions and in a war such as that which is now being waged would have been wholly lacking in efficiency. Jefferson favored such a law, and one of the ablest unofficial pronouncements of President Lincoln was in favor of the draft act of 1863."

Draft Law Necessary.
"Before Great Britain had proceeded far with the performance of her part in the pending struggle her statesmen and military leaders realized that such a law was necessary to raise an efficient army, and after a long struggle such an act was finally passed. 'The same thing is true of Canada, and only within the past few months has such an act been passed by the Canadian parliament, so that it will be seen that in the very beginning of the participation by the United States in the war congress, profiting by the mistakes of her allies, promptly passed the selective draft law which compels those between the ages of 21 and 31 years to recognize that the rights of citizenship involve a reciprocal duty and makes every man with military age respond to a call to the colors when his service is needed."

"Within this period of six months there have been an army of 1,000,000 men raised by the volunteer system supplemented by the selective draft law. This army has been raised, too, by the civilian forces of the government, and we have had the remarkable spectacle within recent weeks of more than 300,000 young men mobilizing to their respective rendezvous unaccompanied by military leaders and practically on orders issued by the commander in chief of the army through appropriate tribunals in the different states. If the whole army could have been raised by this method instead of through a resort to the volunteer system the burdens upon individual communities and would have been more equitably distributed throughout the several communities in the several states, thus affording protection against the depletion of labor in commercial, agricultural and industrial life."

"Next in importance was the act appropriating \$640,000,000 for the construction of aircraft, and later the bill providing for the creation of the aircraft board. Under these two acts the United States with a possible output of a few airplanes per year will now, through the mobilization of its industrial life to the accomplishment of this important work, be able to construct airplanes in sufficient numbers to meet her own requirements and possibly those of her allies as well. It has been asserted in many quarters these machines are to be a determining factor in the war. America is prepared to perform her part both in the number of machines to be furnished and in the splendid personnel to operate them."

"But while plans for the reorganization and mobilization of a large land force were being placed upon the statute books and carried into execution the naval program has not been neglected. In order to secure an expeditionary delivery of material, \$215,000,000, while by the act of April 17, 1917, \$100,000,000 was appropriated to be expended by the president in his discretion."

"Supplementing this legislation and in order to raise money to meet the vast expenditures which the war imposed the act of April 24, 1917, gave authority for the issuance of \$7,000,000,000 of bonds and certificates of indebtedness."

Seizure of Enemy Vessels.

"On May 12, 1917, an act was passed authorizing the president to seize all vessels belonging to citizens of enemy nations. It was under this act that the enemy vessels which were interned in the rivers and harbors of the United States and the colonial possessions were taken charge of by the government; not, however, until many of them had been so crippled by their former officers and crews as to render their immediate use impossible."

"On the 15th of June the espionage bill passed, for the protection of the government against alien enemies, and made them criminals punishable by severe fines and imprisonment, or both. The same bill gave the president absolute control over the movements of all vessels, foreign and domestic, in the territorial waters of the United States, with the right to take possession of the same and to prohibit entry to foreign vessels within the same waters and to seize arms and ammunition intended for export. It authorized him to prohibit exportations to any or all countries by proclamation and to suspend at such times and under such regulations as he might fix, and empowered him to refuse clearance to any vessel, domestic or foreign, carrying such goods. This act was extremely broad in its terms and covered many conditions that might arise and which threatened danger to the country."

"One of the most important measures is that of June 15, 1917, appropriating \$750,000,000 for the construction of a merchant marine to take the place of shipping now being destroyed by the ruthless submarine policy of the imperial German government. It is hoped that, when once under full headway, the losses sustained in the ocean carrying business will be more than compensated for by the construction of new vessels."

"The act which evoked much bitter criticism and opposition, both in the senate and in the house of representatives, is that of August 10, 1917, known as the food control bill. Its provisions were assailed, and yet, when the vote was had, few in either body voted against it—another evidence that the congress has been and is ready to do all that may be deemed necessary in this crisis."

"An act of equal importance is that of August 10, providing for the stimulating of agriculture and facilitating the distribution of agricultural products. These two measures, taken together, will enable the president and his appointing body to carry out their terms to stabilize prices and control the food products of the country, both for our own and our allies' uses."

"The act of June 12, 1917, amendatory of the war risk insurance measure of September 2, 1914, provides for the insurance of the officers and men of merchant vessels, provides compensation in cases of permanent disability incurred in the course of their business, and then broadens the former act in its terms, appropriating \$50,000,000 for carrying out the purposes thereof."

Soldiers' Insurance Law.
"One of the very important measures which passed in the closing days of the session was the bill providing for the insurance of soldiers and sailors composing the military and naval establishments. It is believed that this measure will greatly reduce the pensions which every war has compelled the government to pay and at the same time make the men of our army and navy feel that their loved ones at home will be cared for in the emergency of war the worst befalls them."

"Attention has only been called to a few of the more important measures that have been passed at this session of congress. There are numerous provisions in the various appropriation bills enlarging the powers of the president in the conduct of the war and appropriating large sums of money. It is difficult in a statement of any reasonable length to show their importance, but enough has been given to show that no former congress has ever enlarged the powers of the president in the conduct of the war and appropriated large sums of money. It is difficult in a statement of any reasonable length to show their importance, but enough has been given to show that no former congress has ever enlarged the powers of the president in the conduct of the war and appropriated large sums of money."

Mouth Decorations.
It is amazing how ideas of beauty vary with latitude and longitude. In Japan, the professional beauty loves to appear with golden teeth, in India she prefers them stained red, but in certain parts of Sumatra a lady who respected herself would condescend to have any front teeth at all. They are removed the moment they appear, and strictly suppressed if they should try again."



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We Might Be Prussians, But Are We?

By EDMUND VANCE COOKE

"But for the grace of God, there goes Isaac Watts."

The statement has been attributed to several theologians, but Watts will serve. The story is that the speaker saw a drunken vagabond pass by on his way to the gallows, and, though the speaker had never been accused of criminal tendencies, he recognized the essential unity of the human race in his charitable exclamation. Similarly, some charitable people are still excusing the heinous offenses of Prussian autocracy and militarism by saying that German civilization is as high as ours, and that therefore we would do the same the Germans have done had we been in the same situation as Germany was and is.

Now, there is a deep truth in the assertion of Dr. Watts and of the German apologists. Given the heredity and the environment of the vagabond, and Dr. Watts might have been on his way to the gallows. Given an emperor "by divine right", a Reichstag without any actual governing power, a Bundesrath with the real governing power, and the Kaiser in control of that, a militaristic training of generations until respect for authority and the impulse to obey were second nature; given a philosophy carefully fostered by every educational influence (from primer class to university) that the state is supreme and is beyond all moral law and that therefore the orders of the state expressed through its army are to be carried out implicitly; given the

training of child, father, and grandfather that war is man's natural state and is God's way in the world, that our Kaiser is the emperor, and must be enforced upon the world for its betterment and ours—given this background, there is no reasonable doubt that you and I would be Prussianized, that the Kaiser would appear to us like the leading member of the trinity, and that schrecklich would be his prophet and his instrument.

The answer to this is that Dr. Watts was not the vagabond and that we are not, as yet, a Prussianized people. If the Germans had had a struggle toward personal and political liberty from the time of Magna Charta, a Declaration of Independence and a century and a third of self-expression in government, with an absence of militarism all the time except in rare cases of extreme national peril, the Germans might very likely have surpassed us, for we have been shamefully negligent of some of the opportunities of democracy. Unfortunately for them and for us, this has not been their history, and so today there is apparently no oath too solemn not to be disregarded, no barbarism too heartless not to be committed, no decency too established not to be violated by the German nation, provided only that it furthers the immediate aim of that nation.

to continue as free as you from control because I assert that I am "civilized" as you are and that my psychology is the same?

Well, Germany has gone down the highway of the nations and, "civilized" though she be, she has acted like some sort of a maniac. We might have done the same, but we didn't. Watts might have been the gallows bird, but he wasn't.

When we shoot Nurse Cavell, when we execute Captain Fryes, when we bomb schoolhouses and hospitals, when we use our diplomats stationed under the protection of a friendly power to hatch schemes to burn and slay, and while professing friendship in words plot to array enemies against her, when we adopt the watchword "Spurles versenkt"—when we do these things, not as individual criminals, but as expressions of governmental policy, then maybe there will be some democratized Germany to call us to account.

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