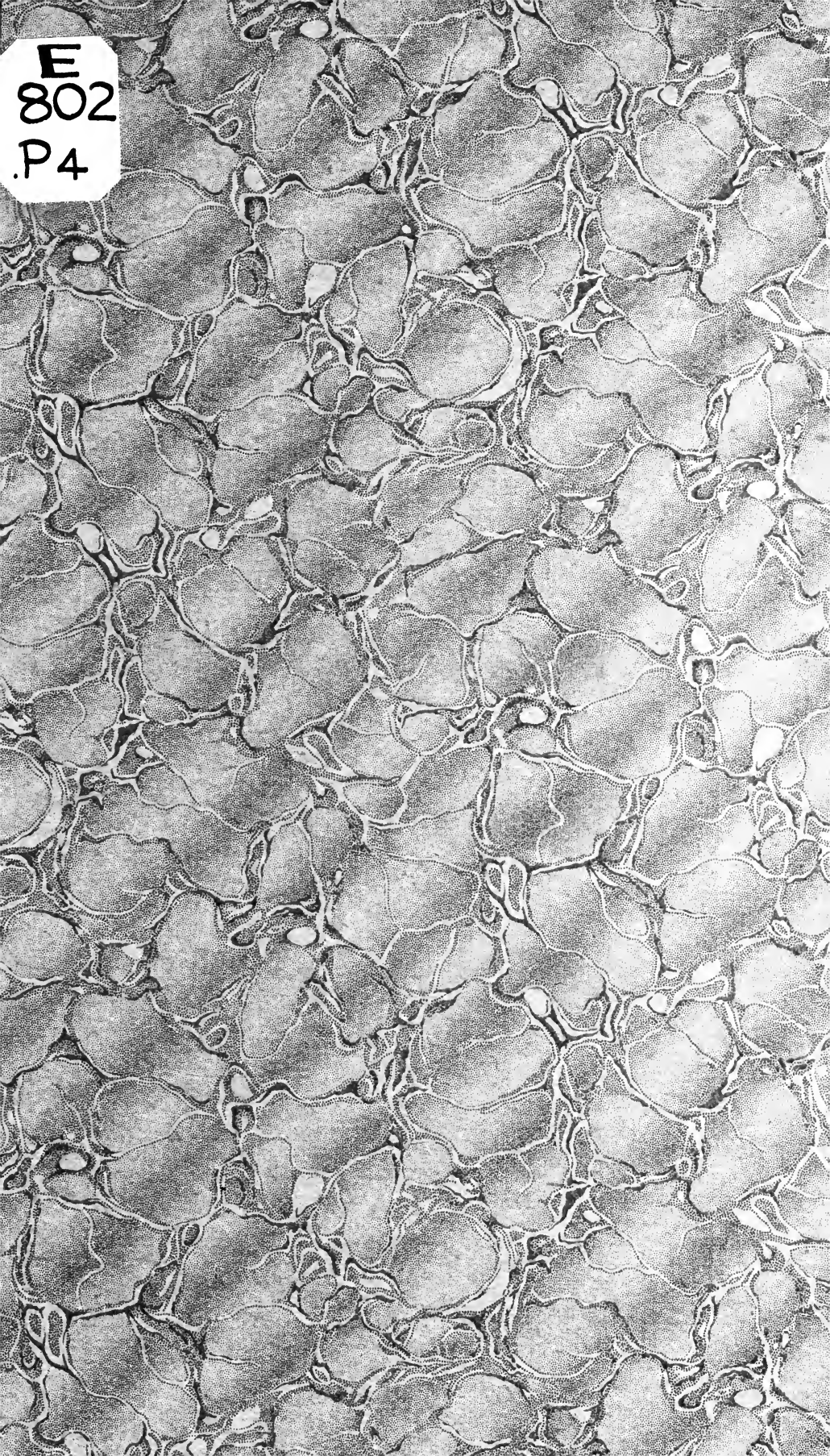
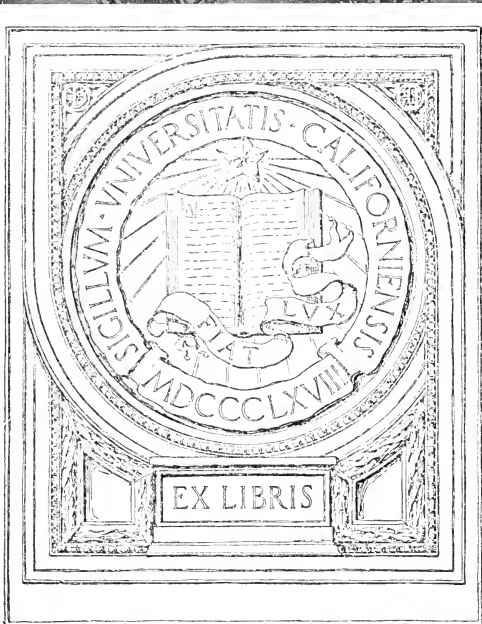


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CONSERVATION OF FOOD

The Public Services of
HERBERT C. HOOVER

SPEECH

OF

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HON. JAMES D. PHELAN,

OF CALIFORNIA //

1861-

1930.

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 16, 1917



WASHINGTON
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SPEECH
OF
HON. JAMES D. PHELAN.

CONSERVATION OF FOOD.

The Senate as in Committee of the Whole resumed the consideration of the bill (H. R. 4961) to provide for the national security and defense by encouraging the production, conserving the supply, and controlling the distribution of food products and fuel.

Mr. PHELAN. Mr. President, the Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. PENROSE] the other day seemed to intimate in the course of his speech that it was only when California was concerned that I was moved to take part in the debate.

I have listened to the philippic against my esteemed countryman, Mr. Herbert C. Hoover, delivered by the Senator from Missouri [Mr. REED], and I can not see, after listening for several hours, that in any way has his personal integrity been impugned, his capacity impeached, or his ability to serve his country in this crisis in any way discredited. If he were not a man who had attracted the attention of the world, he would not be the subject of discussion in this Chamber. If he were not a man who had already demonstrated his fitness, his name, which is not before us in any official way, would not be considered in a long and serious argument. The Senator from Missouri seeks more to criticize the methods proclaimed by Mr. Hoover, growing out of his long experience abroad, than to inform us positively why in this emergency, if he should be selected, he would not be the most admirable and capable man of whom the world to-day has knowledge for this special task.

I know the Senator from Missouri has been accustomed in his own State to try before juries men indicted for and doubtless guilty of petty offenses. He has pursued a style in his argument which reminds one more of the method of a lawyer pleading to a jury in condemnation of some culprit than of trying to convey information to the Senate now engaged in the consideration of a measure which but incidentally involves the services of Mr. Hoover. I think the Senator from Missouri enjoyed quite as much as we have enjoyed his address and discussion, because he was relieved from following the rules of evidence, and he introduced any kind of matter without regard to its relevance in order to make his address, if not convincing, at any rate entertaining.

The first indictment the Senator made against Mr. Hoover was that there was a doubt as to his Americanism. The Senator from Missouri did not say that Mr. Hoover was not born in the wheat belt, because he was born, confessedly, in the State of Iowa. The Senator did not say that Mr. Hoover lacked experience in a State where the products are so diversified as in

California; because as a young man he went to California, lived among her people, participated in their activities, and was graduated at the great Stanford University at Palo Alto, by which he is considered to-day one of its honored trustees and worthy sons. The faculty take an especial pride in the achievements of the boy whom they sent out upon the world.

His sin began when, with the advantages of birth in Iowa and education in California, he dared to go to China and to Australia and South Africa—certainly a most serious offense. No American can tolerate, in his amiable conceit, the thought of one of his fellows going out of the limits of the United States, because, be it known, our country embraces everything that is both good and wise, everything in the domain of the vegetable, the mineral, the animal, and the intellectual kingdoms, and therefore a man is put on the defensive when he goes abroad. But

How much the fool who has been sent to roam
Excels the fool who has been kept at home.

It has occurred to the proverb maker, and possibly it is within our own experience, that a man who has traveled not only becomes possessed of more information but I believe he becomes even a better American. If he goes abroad and garners experience in every field and still remains an American, his asset to us as an American citizen is very much greater than had he remained at home.

He went to Australia. We know that vast field. He went to China to open mines. He went to South Africa. In those countries he not only acquired knowledge and experience of men and affairs but he acquired an honorable fortune. Going away from the apron strings of his native land into the hard places of the earth, there in competition with men, engineers like himself and miners like himself, to have wrested from the reluctant earth a fortune, which he has wisely employed, certainly should not be a matter of reproach. All these things he has done.

Before the war he found himself in London. My first knowledge of Mr. Hoover's work was in London, when in 1913 I went there in an official capacity to interest the British Government to participate in the Panama-Pacific Exposition. At that time Mr. Hoover stood at the head, not of Englishmen, not of Australians, not of Africans, but of Americans. It became advisable to organize a committee for the purpose of proving to the British Board of Trade that there was a real and valuable trade purpose to be subserved by participating in that international exposition. Mr. Hoover undertook that work, having been unanimously selected by his fellows. I may say here that a remarkable thing about this man is his quality of leadership and genius for organization. There, in a strange land and among his compatriots he was regarded as the first citizen and to him they turned.

Then the war broke out, and Mr. Hoover, among the Americans who were in London, not as exiles, but in prosecuting the world's work in which Africa, Australia, China, and America were all involved, had become international, not only in his vocation, not only in his affairs, but in his comprehensive understanding of and sympathy with the needs of humanity. When a man has traveled he learns probably better to understand his fellow man and does not confine his affections and exclusive

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interest to those who are nearest to him. It is a kind of religion, an elevation of spirit, a broadening of vision. As Thoreau said, "When a man has traveled, when he has robbed the horizon of his native fields of their mystery and trampled the blue of the distant mountains with his feet, he begins to think of another world"—the world of humanity.

Travel is an expansive process, giving breadth, love, and universality of vision to the man who is so fortunate as to enjoy its opportunities.

As was said when America began to grow—

No pent-up Utica confines our powers,
But the whole boundless continent is ours.

And now that the world war has given us the world for our stage, let us have a world-wide man to do our work.

There is a craving to get out of our provincialism and expand more and more. Hoover is a pioneer American, you may say, in that realm of usefulness, both in the world development of resources and in the practical expression of humane sentiments. What was the magnitude of the enterprise which gave him fame? How much money was involved in his work in Belgium, of which we have heard? He presided over the Belgian relief committee and organized it. We have relief committees on every corner in the United States. Everybody within his limitations is trying to help; but there he was at the head—and he was the head, and it is well that he was the head—of a commission which possessed the confidence of England, of France, and of the United States. Into his hands—I am speaking of him individually now—there was deposited no less than \$250,000,000 for Belgian relief and for the relief of the people of the north of France within the very few years during which the war has progressed.

I was told on one occasion that he was given a check on the French Treasury for \$4,000,000, without any understanding whatever that it should be accounted for, nor was he required to make an accounting; but he did make an accounting. He is a business man. He was not going to expose himself to the taunts of the malicious or the ignorant. He kept books, and the overhead expense in the administration of that great fund was only one-sixteenth of 1 per cent. It was a labor of love, and he calls upon those to help in the same spirit as volunteers; and here to-day in Washington, rallied by his side, are hundreds of volunteers, willing under his leadership to carry on this work of relief and conservation. An overhead expense of one-sixteenth of 1 per cent is certainly a most excellent showing in the administration of a relief fund involving \$250,000,000 in a strange land; and, having acquired that priceless experience, he is available for our purposes. Do we not need such a man?

The Senator has intimated that he was a self-seeker. I interrogated him to ask whether as a matter of fact the President of the United States had not sent for him. The President did not know him personally; but the President lives in the world. As a citizen of the world he knew of the fame of Hoover, and he called upon Hoover, not to confer any benefit upon Hoover; he called upon Hoover to render assistance to his native land. While the Senator from Missouri was talking I rang up Mr. Hoover and asked him as to his citizenship. "Why," he said, "I am an American. I never for one minute relinquished my citizenship. I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of

California, qualified to vote in California. I never had any other thought."

It is rather painful that a man should be expatriated, even in the course of an afternoon's speech, when his great achievements are the glory of his country. Hoover, the American—so he is regarded abroad, as he should be regarded at home, with appreciation and affection. He is a man that gives no offense. He is a man, as you have observed, of quiet manner. That he has been the subject of voluminous advertising is no fault of his own. The instincts of our journalists are very often true. They find a man modest, and in proportion to his modesty they make him conspicuous, if he has merit. If he is a self-seeker, they leave him alone. Because Mr. Hoover has won the esteem of the press and his achievements have been published far and wide is no reason why Mr. Hoover himself is not a modest man. He is a modest man, because "modesty is the chastity of merit."

He can not make a speech as eloquent as a speech by the Senator from Missouri. If he could, how convincing indeed he would be, having both the eloquence and the facts! He lacks the ability to present his case; and because he is here this afternoon made the subject of such severe criticism I have ventured, all unprepared, to tell you the manner of man he is and the character of his work.

I do not think, though, that anything in the remarks of the Senator from Missouri really made any impression, except—and it was new to me—the assertion that he engaged in speculation in foodstuffs. In an inspired article, as I should call it, by Ernest Poole, in the Saturday Evening Post of May 26, 1917, I find that among the difficulties experienced by Hoover in purchasing supplies from charity funds, meager as they were in proportion to the vast need, it was incumbent upon him as a humanitarian as well as a business man to drive as hard and fast a bargain for the suffering poor as though he were engaged in a gainful business for himself. There is no charge here that he did engage in speculation for himself. The learned Senator from Missouri exonerates him from all fault of that kind; but still he says that he did speculate. This is the character of the speculation, the object manifestly being to get the most food against the hoarding of speculators for the hungry mouths of the unfortunate people for whom he had been administering this great trust.

I read from the article I mentioned:

It—

This great work—

must be done cheaply and without fail. And, in order to save every possible dollar, only those kinds of food must be bought that would give the greatest nourishment. This they learned from expert dietitians.

But as to purchasing supplies there were big men on the C. R. B. who needed no expert advice. They knew all the tricks of the business. When the price of beans began to rise they bought 1,000 tons of beans and threw them back in one lot on the market. Down went prices. They bought in small lots. Slowly again the price began rising; but once more the terrific impact of 1,000 tons of beans was felt. Again the price dropped, and again their agents bought beans in small lots.

So again and again did that same thousand tons of beans hammer down prices and save the day. The same was true wherever they went. In food and in shoes and clothing repeatedly through expert advice of business men as shrewd as themselves they went into the market and bought at cost, and often below it.

These are the facts. That is the method of the speculator, if you please—to buy and to sell—and the market is affected by purchases and by sales. That is where he utilized his knowledge of the business methods of the world and turned them to good account. Certainly that is not a reproach.

While the Senator from Missouri was talking, I rang up Mr. Hoover on the telephone again and said that he was being accused of speculating, not necessarily in his own interest, with the funds of the Belgian relief commission. I said, "What truth is there in it?" desiring to communicate his own statement to the Senate. He expressed very considerable indignation. He may be a mild-mannered man, as is described, but, mild-mannered as a man may be, he would naturally resent any imputation which he thought reflected upon his good name or his honor. I hastily assured him there was no accusation of that kind; but I said: "What was the practice in securing your food supplies, in making your purchases in the open market, with a view possibly of getting better rates for the trust which you were administering?" He said there was no speculation of any character. He went into the open market and purchased goods, and if he sold goods it was in order to make more advantageous purchases; and the nearest thing that might approach speculation, he said, was when in the United States he purchased a quantity of goods of some character, and could not find a ship for it, and therefore was obliged to sell it in the market, netting, I believe, a profit; but that profit went into the Belgian relief fund, and made more easy the administration of his trust in meeting the demands of those who were dependent upon it.

Mr. REED. Mr. President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON of California in the chair). Does the Senator from California yield to the Senator from Missouri?

Mr. PHELAN. I do.

Mr. REED. I should like to have the Senator, now, be specific. I should like to know if Mr. Hoover repudiates this bean story that is printed over Mr. Poole's signature in the Saturday Evening Post?

Mr. PHELAN. I have read approvingly the bean story published by Mr. Ernest Poole in the Saturday Evening Post. I have not Mr. Hoover's word for it. I had not read the story when I telephoned half an hour ago to Mr. Hoover, but I do not know why Mr. Hoover should disavow it, and I am willing to assume that it is true—

Mr. REED. Very well.

Mr. PHELAN. For this reason: This excerpt was given to me by Mr. Hoover's friend, Judge Curtis Lindley, of California, who is one of his coadjutors. I asked him for information about Hoover, and he handed me this. That is why I said I believed it was inspired, and therefore true.

Mr. REED. When the Senator says "He handed me this," he has in his hand the Saturday Evening Post containing Mr. Poole's article, and that is what he refers to as an inspired article.

Mr. PHELAN. It is.

Mr. REED. The Senator admits that statement to be true, and in addition to that says that Mr. Hoover states that if he

sold anything in this country it was with the idea of buying more. Now, will the Senator tell the Senate and the country why a man engaged in buying foodstuffs for Belgium, and having bought foodstuffs for Belgium, should sell them for the purpose of buying more, unless he did it to affect the price? Why sell the very goods you had bought with the intention of immediately buying more unless you did it for the purpose of breaking the market?

Mr. PHELAN. I think it was perfectly plain in my statement, Mr. President, that the deliberate intention of Mr. Hoover, according to this article, was to force down the mounting prices which heartless speculation had sought to impose even upon a charity fund. I can not see that any apology is necessary for Mr. Hoover in a warfare, of that kind, fighting the devil with fire, to unload a carload here and there in order to buy more advantageously a larger quantity for the purposes which I mentioned.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I do not want to interrupt the Senator—

Mr. PHELAN. It does not interrupt me.

Mr. REED. The Senator, then, admits that the process was to go into the market and buy in small quantities until a very large amount had been accumulated? That, of course, would have the effect gradually of raising the price. Having raised the price, the process then was to throw the whole of that which had been bought into the market and break it, and repeat the operation. Now, if that be not strictly in accordance with the most approved methods of Wall Street gambling and of wheat-pit gambling, will the Senator please tell us what the better methods are?

Mr. PHELAN. It is not the gallows that makes the crime.

Mr. REED. No; but it is the crime that makes the necessity for the gallows.

Mr. PHELAN. Granted. An act may be done by a patriot which, if done by a lesser mortal, would be crime. In history, patriots have committed what we call crimes believing that they were acting in a righteous cause. History, for instance, has never put Brutus in the category of ordinary offenders. A man may commit an overt act of any kind not strictly in accordance with the law and history would find justification for him on account of the purity of his motives. It is all a matter of ethics and viewpoint.

To buy and sell speculatively in Wall Street is an offense, if you please. I do not know that it is even a statutory offense. To buy and sell in the wheat pit in Chicago is an offense according to the Senator from Missouri. I do not know that it is a statutory offense. At any rate, it is frequently practiced. But assuming that it is an offense, it is not an offense of such a character as to deter from engaging in it a man actuated by good and pure motives in a conflict with speculators. He might buy in the ordinary market from jobbers and from brokers and easily consume the entire sum which was at his disposal without accomplishing one tithe of the good which he would have accomplished had he resorted to the methods of the broker and the speculator.

I am not here to apologize for Mr. Hoover's action as described in this article by Mr. Poole. If these acts in themselves were of a reprehensible character—which I can not admit, because they violate no law, the buying and selling on the mar-

ket—if these acts were of a reprehensible character, what must be the character of the conduct of those men who presented an almost impassable barrier to the Belgian Relief Commission seeking food for hungry people? In order to overcome that barrier it was necessary for Mr. Hoover and his confrères to break it down or to scale it. They accomplished their just purposes by resorting to the methods practiced by brokers, let us admit, and those methods are not wrongfully employed when employed for good purposes; certainly not wrongfully employed when employed to overcome a barrier against the Belgian relief, in this instance, seeking food for hungry people.

Mr. REED. Mr. President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from California yield to the Senator from Missouri?

Mr. PHELAN. I do.

Mr. REED. If the Senator will yield for one further interruption, the Senator speaks of a barrier that had been created.

Mr. PHELAN. The barrier of high prices.

Mr. REED. Yes. Now, let us see. Mr. Hoover went into the market and bought his 10,000 tons of beans. He bought them on a market that existed. It is not claimed that the market then was very high; but the buying of these 10,000 tons of beans ran the market up. Now, he had his beans; he had bought them in a market that was not controlled; but having thus gained control of the market, he proceeded to hurl all the 10,000 tons of beans into the market at once, and, to use the expression of the writer, the eulogist, the impact of that blow broke the market; and so he repeated the operation. Now, I think the Senator is not warranted in saying that there was any barrier of high prices set against him in the first instance. He simply did as others have done; in buying enough to control the market he boosted the prices. He was safe in doing it because, having complete control of the market, he could drive them down. I think the Senator's assumption that he had a barrier of high prices is not borne out by anything stated in the article, or by any fact known to anybody. However, I thank the Senator. I should not have so long interrupted him.

Mr. PHELAN. I think the Senator from Missouri understands quite as well as I the nature of the offense which he has charged to Mr. Hoover, and I am confidently disposed to offer a plea of justification; and I will leave that to the consideration of the Senate.

There is one other point which the Senator made, and were it not so serious it would be amusing. I think the Senator overlooks the fact, so accustomed is he to these piping hours of peace within these precincts, that we are at war, serious war, and in order to win a victory it is not only necessary to have men and munitions and those "great guns which make ambition virtue"; it is necessary to have food supplies not only for the combatants but for the noncombatants, for the civilian population. We have lived so long in luxury and abundance that it is hard, I admit, to conceive of any condition where there will not be enough food for us all, even when traveling in palace cars. We have been unused to privation.

Now, we are to profit only by our own experience? The wise man has said that experience is the mistress of fools. We must profit by the experience of others if we are wise; and I have here this startling statement:

This year we are faced with a world shortage.

This statement was made by Mr. Hoover at Brown University.

Next year this shortage will be greater. * * * Our whole food problem revolves around one single factor—the diminishing productivity of Europe and the disruption of commerce by armored barriers.

He goes on to say :

Uppermost in my mind, and present I hope in yours, is the problem which I was recalled from Europe to engage myself with on behalf of the President.

In passing, I may say that Mr. Hoover was not a self-seeker, but was brought to this country by the President. At Washington on May 19 the President issued the following statement.

After calling attention to the desperate condition in which this country would be involved on account of a food shortage and speculation, he adds :

I have asked Mr. Herbert Hoover to undertake this all-important task of food administration. He has expressed his willingness to do so on condition that he is to receive no payment for his services, and that the whole of the force under him, exclusive of clerical assistance, shall be employed, so far as possible, upon the same volunteer basis.

He has expressed his confidence that this difficult matter of food administration can be successfully accomplished through the voluntary cooperation and direction of legitimate distributors of foodstuffs and with the help of the women of the country.

Although it is absolutely necessary that unquestionable powers shall be placed in my hands in order to insure the success of this administration of the food supplies of the country, I am confident that the exercise of those powers will be necessary only in the few cases where some small and selfish minority proves unwilling to put the Nation's interests above personal advantage, and that the whole country will heartily support Mr. Hoover's efforts by supplying the necessary volunteer agencies throughout the country for the intelligent control of food consumption and securing the cooperation of the most capable leaders of the very interests most directly affected, that the exercise of the powers deputed to him will rest very successfully upon the good will and cooperation of the people themselves, and that the ordinary economic machinery of the country will be left substantially undisturbed.

Now, continuing Mr. Hoover's own statement before Brown University, the food controller by appointment of the President, says :

I do not propose in these few minutes to enter the forest of dietetic, administrative, and economic difficulties with which the problem is surrounded. I wish to present but one theme to your mind. Our whole food problem revolves around one single factor—the diminishing productivity of Europe and the disruption of commerce by armored barriers.

Since the wonderful world harvest of 1915 the food supplies of the world have been steadily lessening. This year we are faced with a world shortage and next year the shortage will be greater. Seventy million men in Europe have been called out of productive labor and devoted to fighting and the production of implements of war. The women have been unable to in full renew the harvest, and there has been a great diversion of animals and transport to war. The land is no longer receiving the fertilizer of old. In order to decrease the production of fodder grains and increase the production of bread grains, and to secure protein and fat supplies, Europe is eating into her capital of animals. This again reacts on the productivity of the land, and foodstuffs are beyond this daily being destroyed at sea in shiploads. Our own allies are separated from their normal markets of Russia, Bulgaria, Roumania, while the Argentine has had a crop failure, and the shortage of our allies therefore is more acute than their own decline represents.

It is the impact of this shortage that has knocked at every door in the United States. We are a country of abundant surplus, yet the reverberation of Europe's shortage would have thundered imperiously, even had we never entered the war.

The reaction of Europe has raised our prices above the endurable level, and will, if we do nothing, raise them still higher, for their need grows yearly. By our entry into the war we arrive at two issues: First, the issue we must have partially fronted in any event, the control of our food so as to ameliorate prices, for unless we can do so we must

meet a raise of wages with all its vicious circle of social disruption at a time when maximum efficiency is vital to our safety; second, that we may also meet the increased demands of our allies that they may remain constant in the war.

These problems are not insoluble if taken in time. In their solution lies a prime test of democracy. The question is, Can our form of government put forward the organization, the devotion, the self-denial, the efficiency, the preparation in advance of storm? Must we wait until disaster is upon us and then reap the whirlwind in a lament of "Too late"? Can it not only do this in time, but can it also do so without resort to measures of Prussianism? I believe it can. I believe our faith is right. I believe democracy can not only defend itself but it can prepare in time. I believe that the spirit of self-sacrifice and idealism runs higher among our people than in any other land. I believe with the mobilization of the voluntary support of our people these problems are soluble, but I know that no people are of such idealism but that some individuals and their selfishness would defeat the majority. To this end we must give power, but that is not the power of Prussianism any more than is the power of police to repress crime.

In our abundance, our undeveloped resources, our wastage and extravagance, we hold it in our power, and ours alone, to keep the wolf from the door of the world. This duty is wider than war—it is as wide as our humanity.

I submit that a man who has such broad experience, who so well marshals his facts, who is so convincing in his statements, is entitled to be considered an authority upon a subject on which most of us are densely ignorant.

There is nothing in his career to indicate that he has any other purpose than that of doing good to his country and to our allies. He wishes to conserve the food at reasonable prices; and I have heard him, in the presence of many Senators, say that one of his first concerns was to give an adequate return to the farmer. Certainly there is no plan involved under the administration of this American to deprive the producer of adequate returns for his product. I have heard him debate in conversation with a Member of this body whether it would not be better to fix a price of \$1.50 for wheat rather than \$1.25, and he favored the larger amount.

It is only to prevent excessive charges, speculative prices, that he is to act as a food administrator. He is there now in a volunteer capacity under the authority of the President, and his only purpose is to be of service. Shall we not enlist his service?

The Senator from Missouri, in the defense of the spirit of American liberty and the Constitution, again reverts to the danger of investing too much power in one man; that the power of a food regulator might be administered for the injury of the people and that it might be easily abused. I think we must assume in giving a man a position of power and responsibility that power brings with it that he is there to serve the Government that selected him for a particular task, and not to serve private interests or speculation; that is, he is there in the spirit which seems to be the atmosphere of a man, in the spirit of helpful and patriotic service.

Of course when we get in trouble, as in war, we turn aside for the hour from the so-called established principles or doctrines of democracy. We have done it in the Senate time and time again, and we let down our checks and balances. We see that effective and prompt action is vitally necessary. But let us hope it will very soon be over; everything done is for "the period of the war." We can not use the methods of peace and win victories in war; that seems to be conceded; and that we have a President who has none of the taint of the usurper in his composition is a very good thing for us in a national crisis like this. We are working under our "war powers," and our Presi-

dent has become the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

History has given us examples of men who, invested with power, were loath to give it up. It was the surprise of Europe that Washington having been in the supreme command should have relinquished his authority. It was unknown in the Old World for a man to have attained power and yield it. Byron expressed a surprise and gratification when he said:

Where can the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the great,
Where neither guilty glory glows
Nor despicable state?
Yes; one, the first, the last, the best,
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dare not hate,
Bequeath the name of Washington;
To make man blush, there is but one!

In the long succession of American Presidents the example of Washington has been such that there has never even been so much as a suspicion of usurpation, of seizing power which the people would fain deny. The unwritten law even has been observed with respect to a third presidential term. Can it be possible that a food conservator, invested with the power of regulating the supplies of food, is going to menace our democratic institutions? That is not the kind of power that destroys democracies, but I really think, having heard the gentleman describe the dietary which the food controller is about to impose, it would, if observed, improve rather than impair our constitutions!

Now, Mr. President, can we not safely accept this dictator without fear?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN. Mr. President, may I interrupt the Senator for a moment? When I heard the statement some days ago that Mr. Hoover has practically expatriated himself, or, rather, concluded from the statement that he was really not a citizen of the United States, to satisfy myself I asked and received a brief statement from his secretary as to his life, which I submit to the Senator and in the Senator's time I ask that he read it into his speech. It is very brief and it will save any further questions.

Mr. PHELAN. At the request of the Senator from Oregon, I am very glad to read the brief statement, which is authentic.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN. It was sent to me by Mr. Hoover's secretary.

Mr. PHELAN. It is vouched for by the secretary of Mr. Hoover. Here is the true story of his life:

Herbert Clark Hoover: Born West Branch, Iowa, August 10, 1874. Quaker parents. After death of parents in 1883, sent to Oregon in charge of relatives, residing at Newberg and Salem, Oreg., until 1891. Became self-supporting at 13 years of age. Went to Stanford University, California, 1891, graduating 1895 as mining engineer. Employed professionally in New Mexico, Colorado, California, and Oregon until 1897, part time with United States Geological Survey. In 1897 went to Australia in administrative metallurgical work and mining.

Returned to California 1899. After few months left for China as an engineering adviser to the Chinese Government. Returned to California 1900, after outbreak of Boxer rebellion. After few months left California again for China as manager of industrial works, comprising coal mines and works, fleet of 20 ships, canals, railways, and harbor works, employing some 25,000 men. Returned to California in 1901.

I observe that he has always returned to California; he could not stay away.

Mr. REED. How long did he stay there? A few months?

Mr. PHELAN (reading)—

Thereafter opened offices in San Francisco, New York, and London, visiting all points annually. Employed in administration of large industrial works, embracing railways, metallurgical work, mining, iron and steel, shipping, land, and electrical enterprises in California, Colorado, Alaska, Mexico, India, Russia, and China, until the war broke out in 1914. Was a trustee of Stanford University, Cal., and spent much time there, 1901-1914, in affairs of that institution and on conduct of business in that State. Went to London just before war broke out. When the war broke out became engaged in the organization of return of stranded Americans; In October, 1914, organized commission for relief in Belgium, and remained in Europe during the war with the exception of a return to the United States in the fall of 1915 and the winter of 1917.

The commission for relief in Belgium from October, 1914, until April, 1917, handled the import of upwards to 100,000,000 bushels of wheat, rice, beans, peas, and other cereals, together with many thousands of tons of meat products; operating its own fleet of from 50 to 70 ships, its own mills, and in addition thereto acquired and redistributed cereals and several other staples in the occupied territory involving between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 bushels of other cereals and large quantities of meats, et cetera, et cetera. The commission for relief in Belgium organized and distributed a ration to 10,000,000 people, directly employing upward of 125,000 people in its operations. The personnel was in a great majority volunteer, and the total overhead expenses of the commission up to April, 1917, were three-eighths of 1 per cent. The aggregate amount of money expended on imported foodstuffs and through the organization in the purchase of native food supplies was approximately \$500,000,000.

Never sought public office in any shape or form—

I hope he is not reproaching the rest of us—

Returned to the United States on the direct request of the Government, acting entirely as a volunteer for service during the war only.

It shows his close association, Mr. President, with the United States through his California citizenship and residence. That he is an American there is no question. That he is a usurper with a sinister and malign design of seizing power for some unholy use is absolutely out of the question; that is not in the genius of an American, and he is par excellence an American. It is true he has traveled, but "in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations" he remains an American.

I ask permission to insert in the RECORD an article on Mr. Hoover, the subject of discussion, published in the Saturday Evening Post of May 26, 1917.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, it is so ordered.

The matter referred to is as follows:

HOOPER OF BELGIUM.

[By Ernest Poole.]

Whether this war is to be won for democracy and a lasting peace, or is to be halted, through starvation, in a truce that will make its bloodshed of no avail to humanity—this, to a very large degree, is to be settled now and here by the people of America. We must feed not only our own population but the people of our allies. That we can do this there is little doubt. The resources of this land are so varied and exhaustless that, given the will, the way will be found. And to rouse the will and point the way the Council of National Defense has chosen Hoover of Belgium.

A better leader could not have been found. To rouse the will of this Nation—a will mysteriously vast, compounded of the purposes, the small desires, selfish plans, the hopes and dreams and great ideals, the firm beliefs and the suspicions of more than a hundred million people—here is one whose very name is a great national asset now. For it has become a symbol of that honesty and generous will, that clean, efficient action, which will sweep out of our Yankee minds the suspicion of graft and slackness here. There was no graft in Belgium and there shall be none here. There was clear, hard thinking, exhausting toil and unselfishness in Belgium, and there shall be those qualities here. But to those sentimentalists who love to hear great stirring appeals to their emotions, let it be clearly said at the start that Hoover will disappoint them.

BIG JOBS IN BOTH HEMISPHERES.

For a more intensely sensible man it would be hard to discover. He is 42 years old. Though by no means large of frame, he gives at once an impression of force. His limbs look hard; his smooth face is strong; there is a determined look to his jaws, and his eyes are steady and direct. He is a mining engineer, a man from a ruthless, fighting world, to whom at the outbreak of this war something very like a miracle happened.

Herbert Clark Hoover was born, in 1874, in Iowa. In his boyhood there and in Oregon he early developed an instinct for striking out on his own account. To a large extent he worked his way. He went to school, but learned much more from life itself and the struggles he had. At 17 he entered the School of Mines at Stanford University, where he not only supported himself but was always loaning money to friends. At 21 he graduated and went out with the Geological Survey. One year later he was appointed assistant manager of two large Australian mines, and his work there was so successful that in 1897 he was chosen by the great British mining firm of Bewick, Moreing & Co. to become their chief of staff in western Australia. He held that position for three years.

Then the Chinese Government asked him to take charge of its bureau of mines; and a year later he became general manager of a Belgian corporation there. During the Boxer rebellion Hoover worked a machine gun. Soon after that he was made a partner of Bewick, Moreing & Co. and director of their mining activities. He was still but 28 years old.

Living in London his work now took him far and wide. "In Russia," said a friend of his, "I went with him to a mining region he was directing in the Ural Mountains. This property was larger than Belgium. It took us several hours by train, and many days more in sledges over snow and ice, to inspect it all. One reason for his success in this project was the way he treated the Russians. They did not care for foreigners, who had always treated them with varying degrees of contempt. Hoover did the opposite. He took the Russian ways of work and whenever possible made them his own. He cooperated in every way, and they had soon taken him as their friend. And this is typical of him. He has always somehow or other turned each obstacle to his use."

In his hospitable London home he has led a simple life. He is no society man at all; his manners are far from "finished," and small talk bores him to extinction. He seldom tells funny stories himself, though he likes to hear them. When he plays bridge he plays it hard. When he has a day off he likes to motor with his family out into the country, build a fire, and cook in the open. Another dissipation of his is the reading of detective stories. In these he takes a huge delight. But the rest of Hoover's life is work. At times he labors day and night. "When you're with him on a job," said a friend, "you can call him up at 1 a. m. and he won't appear in the least annoyed." The same is true of his reading. He reads hard and grows absorbed. He has a passion for histories and biographies of all kinds.

By sheer work he has made himself a decidedly forcible writer. His book the Principles of Mining gives in a clear, simple style the methods he himself used to rise. And his other achievement in this line is the translation of De Re Metallica, an old book on metals and mining, written in 1530 by Georg Agricola, a Saxon, who wrote in a doggerel Latin that had defied the efforts of translators for over 400 years. In slaying at this puzzle Hoover took a grim delight. For several years it took his spare time. It was one of his ways of resting.

He was always quietly helping young engineers to get a start. His house was always open to them. As for outsiders in need of assistance, whoever asked Hoover for money was asked, in turn, for his name and address, and these were promptly sent to an officer of the Salvation Army whom Hoover employed to look up such appeals. He was a generous giver—but always, first, he had to be shown. He often helped the Salvation Army; but to other large organized charities or social work of any kind he had given little thought or time except when approached for funds.

Such was Hoover's early life—a swift, almost miraculous rise. In 1914 he was living in London, wealthy and successful, though but in his fortieth year. The fees he received as an engineer amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars. He was known among miners all over the world. It had been a ruthless, fighting world of big mining operations and finance on an international scale. He had not lived the sort of life that is very likely to make a man kind.

Then came the war. On the morning of August 4, 1914, the American consul in London called Hoover on the telephone. "Mr. Hoover," he said, "there's a mob of American citizens here, trying to change letters of credit, bank drafts, and express orders for English gold. And we're swamped! For God's sake come over and help us out!"

GETTING FUNDS FOR PENNILESS TOURISTS.

Hoover went over and got to work. He telephoned to all his friends: "How much money have you in your safes? Get all the cash you can raise at once; get in at the back doors of the banks. Get it anyway short of larceny." These friends responded to his call. They raised about \$200,000. The Government loaned the same amount. And, through their efforts, in two months 45,000 Americans were sent safely home.

Meantime, over in Belgium things were getting desperate. Seven and a half million people were facing starvation; and Hoover was asked to handle the work of relief in Belgium and northern France. At once he called together a few big, able Americans, most of them engineers like himself; and they lost no time in getting to work. The first day they had three rooms—the second day, a dozen.

Their office was organized with a speed that made old England gasp for breath. As a rule, it took two weeks at least for the Government telephone company to install a telephone. In this office it was done overnight, with a switchboard and dozens of instruments. And they thanked the company in a way that has won its devotion ever since. Meantime Hoover had organized. He had sent one man to arrange for ships, and another over to Rotterdam to make ready to transport the supplies from there into Belgium. Others were already buying food.

Hoover's way is to do things first and ask permission later. He and his associates had only \$500,000 promised from the English Government. But, with this in sight, they arranged to place orders every week for \$2,000,000 worth of food! They purchased food, got it to the docks, chartered vessels, and loaded them. Then, when the hatches were all closed, Hoover sought permission to make shipment. He went before the proper official.

"Unless I get four shiploads of food to Belgium before the end of the week those people will starve," he said.

The high official deeply regretted his inability to aid him. The food could not be purchased; the railroads were choked with munitions of war; the ships were all under Government orders. Hoover heard him to the end.

"I have attended to all that," he said. "The ships are loaded and ready. All I need now is clearance papers."

The official stared at him.

"Young man," he said, "there have been men sent to the Tower for less than you have done here. If it were anyone else, or for any other cause, I hate to think what might happen."

The ships sailed a few hours later. So the work of the C. R. B. began.

"We had thought initially," Hoover said, "that so terrible a situation could exist only for days; that we must find a few millions of dollars. But within a month we realized that we were confronted with a task not merely over days but months, and an expenditure far beyond the dreams of any relief hitherto known."

FEEDING THE HUNGRY.

He appealed to the French and English Governments for immense appropriations; and meantime, in tactful cooperation with native leaders over in Belgium and northern France, Hoover and his American friends began to bring order out of chaos. The generous men who intended to help only for days or weeks stayed on for years. Hoover's spirit held them there. The number of these volunteers swelled to 50,000. Some 200 were Americans; the rest were French and Belgians. Thousands labored day and night, and practically all served without pay. The overhead charges of the commission have been six-tenths of 1 per cent; for there was a great cause and a great leader here. And week by week and month by month there grew up a vast intricate organization, with some 4,000 committees all over the world raising money and purchasing supplies, and in Belgium and northern France a carefully worked-out system of over 4,000 other committees, large and small, resting at the bottom upon a group in every commune, with a small warehouse from which food and clothing were issued upon ration cards.

There were soup kitchens, baby canteens where 400,000 babies got special food. In addition 1,200,000 school children got a special meal each day to help check the rapid and ominous spread of tuberculosis among them. This meal cost a million and a quarter dollars a month; but, even so, it did not go far. The public health had to be carefully watched. There had to be rigid control of the distribution of all supplies, both native and imported. Justice must be done to all. Fertilizers and seeds must be found. By the decrease of these and of live stock the native supplies now swiftly declined. The problem grew harder every month. Always more money must be secured; always new remedies must be found.

Nor was it only a problem of feeding. One-half of the Belgians were out of work; and there were the regular paupers—the blind, the orphans, and the helpless. Three million five hundred thousand people

in Belgium and 2,000,000 more in northern France were wholly destitute. They must be clothed with millions of garments, warmed by thousands of tons of coal; and those who were homeless must be housed. New committees constantly had to be formed. In the presence of diminished shipping the inward flow of food must increase. It must be done cheaply and without fail. And, in order to save every possible dollar, only those kinds of food must be bought that would give the greatest nourishment. This they learned from expert dietitians.

But, as to purchasing supplies, there were big men on the C. R. B. who needed no expert advice. They knew all the tricks of the business. When the price of beans began to rise they bought 1,000 tons of beans and threw them back in one lot on the market. Down went prices. They bought in small lots. Slowly again the price began rising; but once more the terrific impact of 1,000 tons of beans was felt. Again the price dropped, and again their agents bought beans in small lots.

So again and again did that same thousand tons of beans hammer down prices and save the day. The same was true wherever they went. In food and in shoes and clothing repeatedly, through expert advice of business men as shrewd as themselves, they went into the market and bought at cost, and often below it.

They employed some 70 cargo ships flying the flag of the C. R. B. They used hundreds of tugs and canal boats and railroad cars. They operated not only warehouses but large mills and factories. And they distributed every month 220,000,000 pounds of bread, 20,000,000 pounds of bacon and lard, 5,000,000 tins of condensed milk, beans, corn, coffee, sugar, and thousands of tons of other supplies. Each month their dependents consumed the wheat product of nearly 200,000 acres. The commission expended \$14,000,000 every month, and made every dollar count. Hoover was in full action now.

But, despite all these resources and these Herculean efforts, "We were haunted in every dark hour," he says, "by the grim tragedy of possible failure; for we never saw a time when our finances were certain for 60 days ahead, or a time when our contracts did not exceed our assets from five million to twenty million dollars." They went begging to the world, and at first the response was promising.

"In a moment of desperation," he writes, "I assessed the miners of Australia, where I had had a connection for years. I told them what they ought to give, and I received in two months \$750,000 for Belgium from a country already combed to the bottom for relief and distress work. We appealed to the miners of Johannesburg, and the laborers in the mines gave 10 per cent of their wages, and the owners duplicated the amount."

THE OLD LADIES' GIFT.

So it was in other parts of the world. There were responses large and small. A letter from two old ladies in England inclosed 12 silver buttons, which they had cut from their best gowns. They said it was all they had to give. Hoover replied, I was told by a friend, to this effect:

"DEAR LADIES: It is not necessary yet to permit such sacrifice as yours. Your action has led one of us here to contribute £10 to the Belgian cause. So what you have done was not in vain. I return your buttons—all except one, which, if you will allow me, I shall keep as a reminder that there are people like you in the world."

But there were not enough people like that, it seemed. And for its work the C. R. B. has been driven to count more and more on the French and British Governments. Of the \$250,000,000 spent in the work more than four-fifths has come from them or from their banks and has been debited to the Belgian nation or to the communes and municipalities in northern France that have received its benefits.

Hoover soon won such implicit trust from the French and British Governments that they asked for no accounting. They put their money in his hands and simply told him to go ahead.

But Hoover did not do business that way. Before many months he had organized an immense and tortuous system of bureaus of accounting, audit, statistics, and inspection covering the whole range of their work from New York and Buenos Aires to the last village in northern France.

"The monument of our efficiency," he said, "lies in the fact that the bread sold in Belgium to those who can pay has always been from 15 to 20 per cent cheaper than in New York City."

From such a record Hoover's fame spread over Europe far and wide. All the Governments of the allies were soon seeking his counsel in regard to the pressing food problems they had at home. And in Germany, when Herr Batocki was made the food dictator there he was prompt in asking Hoover's advice.

Hoover's relation with Germany made the most difficult part of his task. In the life he has led for nearly three years, in London and in

Paris, in Holland and in Belgium, foremost among the chaos of tasks was the anxiety of dealing each day with an occupying army, with arbitrary methods and everchanging rules and laws. He had to negotiate and maintain international agreements for the protection of foods and ships; for guaranties that his supplies should not be consumed by the invaders. It required tact and dogged persistence.

At first the Germans could not understand him. He did not fit into their scheme of things. His Kultur was not the same, and he had no Schrecklichkeit at all—except his Yankee stubbornness. At last, however, they trusted him. They could not let the Belgians die, and here was relief work free of charge.

His businesslike ways appealed to them. Individual German officers became his warm friends and gave him support, and their Government gradually came into line. He still had his troubles, but overcame them. When one of his ships was torpedoed Hoover took a trip to Berlin, where he was solemnly assured that it would never happen again.

"Your excellency," he said to the German, "there was a man once who was annoyed by a snarling dog. He went to see the owner and asked him to muzzle the dog. 'There is no need of that,' said the owner, 'the dog will never bite you.' 'Maybe,' said the man. 'You know the dog will not bite me. I know the dog will not bite me. But does the dog know?'"

"Pardon me one moment, Herr Hoover. I will telephone at once to the dog."

Hoover's parable got action.

That was over two years ago, and there came a respite from submarines. There were other troubles, but he stood his ground. He tried to talk to the German officials as though he had behind him an America ready to rise to a man. But the Germans refused to believe it.

They knew that, in spite of all the appeals Hoover had made to this country, we had contributed to his cause less than 4 per cent of the total amount. And this notwithstanding the fact that his commission had spent more than \$150,000,000 here in the purchase of supplies! Our profits out of the Belgian relief had been \$30,000,000 at least. We had given \$9,000,000 in return. And Hoover felt this deeply.

"Time and time again," he has stated, "when the door of Belgium threatened to close we defended its portals by the assertion that this was an American enterprise, and that the sensibilities of the American people would be wounded beyond measure—would be outraged—if its work were interfered with.

But the Germans scoffed at this idea. In one crisis with a high official, when Hoover had made a veiled threat of this kind, the official responded as follows:

"Mr. Hoover, I will grant your request—not on account of your country, but on account of you and your friends, a small group of eccentric gentlemen who happen to be of American birth. You have worked miracles here in Belgium and the world will not forget you. But don't speak to me of America; for it is not behind you. Your country cares for nothing on earth but money, war profits—only that."

In sizing up other countries, however, Germany has not been strong. And as the causes have piled up and the great issue has grown clear—democracy or tyranny—the nation despised by the German official has at last roused to the summons and taken, with its free allies, the great road that leads to a liberal world.

And so Hoover has been called back home to lead us in that part of our task which is perhaps most pressing now. He is coming to the aid of our Department of Agriculture with the most careful and comprehensive knowledge of all such problems as we must solve, gathered not only from his own work, but from all that he has observed of similar vast operations in the countries of the allies.

Moreover, before coming home he took nearly a month for consultation with members of the British, French, and Italian ministries, and for an accurate survey of the food and shipping situation. And the groundwork has been laid for interallied cooperation in handling and transporting the vast food supplies required from us.

As to the great cause at stake and to the Germany he has known, Hoover has had this to say:

"For two and a half years we have been obliged to remain silent witnesses of the character of the forces dominating this war. But we are now at liberty to say that, though we break with great regret our association with many German individuals, yet it is our conviction, born of our intimate experience and contact, that there is no hope for democracy or liberalism, and consequently for the real peace and safety of our country, unless the system which brought the world into this unfathomable misery is stamped out, once and for all."

