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Conservation of Food and Fuel WAR PROHIBITION

SPEECHES

OF

HON. IRA G. HERSEY
OF MAINE

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 18 AND 23, 1917

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Conservation of Food and Fuel
WAR PROVISIONS
SPEECHES
OF
HON. IRA G. HERSEY.

Conservation of Food and Fuel.

Monday, June 18, 1917.

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H. R. 4961) to provide further for the national security and defense by encouraging the production, conserving the supply, and controlling the distribution of food products and fuel.

Mr. HERSEY. Mr. Chairman, after a careful consideration of the evidence before this committee, and the attention that I have given every moment to the discussion of it in this House, I am heartily in favor of this bill. [Applause.] Its constitutionality seems to be admitted. The great bill we passed to investigate and have a census of the food production of this country has grandly paved the way for this legislation. It seems to me that this bill is a fitting climax to the recent bill just passed by us for a census and the conservation of the food resources of this country. Many things that guided us in the past can not be our guide to-day. We are in a war different from any other war. It is calling upon us for resources never called for before, and it seems to me that we must conserve every food resource of our great country.

I am in favor of this bill, Mr. Chairman, because the President has been frank with us and named beforehand the "dictator," so to speak, who will have charge of this food bill, and I have faith in Mr. Hoover.

Further than that, I am in favor of this measure because it is a bill that stands by the farmer, the agriculturist. Some have expressed fear upon this floor to-day that this bill is against the farmer. I come from a district where nearly every man is a farmer. Agriculture is the principal occupation.

I know these men, nearly everyone of them, and I know their wishes and their desires. I know their hopes and their fears, and I know that everyone trusts Mr. Hoover. I know that everyone of them is in favor of this bill. I know, further, that the farmer has never profited in the past by combinations; he has fought them, and is to-day fighting the food gamblers. They have been his enemies in the past and they will be his enemies in the future, unless we give the President power to destroy them.

It has been well said that it is the farmer who raises the food, but it is the speculator who raises the prices. The farmer does not fix the prices; he is at the mercy of the food gamblers, who are driven by the sole motive of avarice to raise the price of food, that great gains may come to the middleman and the food speculator. I feel that the President, through Mr. Hoover, will destroy the power of these food gamblers, and under this

bill he would give the farmers a chance to market their crops, free from unlawful combinations.

I feel, further, Mr. Chairman, that whatever has been said on the floor here to-day in regard to politics has no place in this discussion nor in this bill. [Applause.] Hitherto I have stood with the President. I have trusted him in his great work. I have voted for the billions given him. I will continue to trust him as the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy. Into his hands I am willing to put this great power which is called autocratic, and it is. I want him to exercise it, and I feel that the whole country is in favor of the project, outside of the food gamblers and speculators, and outside of the few men who want to give the country beer instead of bread. [Applause.]

I am willing to give him this great power to look after and protect the food and producers of the country, and I feel that the law-abiding people of the Nation everywhere, regardless of party, stand for this great food bill. Outside this Congress no one except the gamblers and the brewers are against this bill, and I believe the Congress of the United States should unanimously stand in favor of the bill on its final passage. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, everybody, should stand together and support the President in this great war for humanity.

There was a time, Mr. Chairman, in the old days when Rome was at the height and zenith of its great world power when she had a patriotic and united people. Afterwards she fell, through her vices, when there were slaves on the one hand and great power in a few gamblers and criminals upon the other. Macauley, the poet-historian, writing of the days of Roman greatness, said:

For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the State;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great.

Then lands were fairly 'portioned;
The spoils were fairly sold;
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

I hope the passage of this great food bill will show to the country and to the world that, like the Romans of old, Americans are like brothers in the brave days of to-day. [Applause.]

War Prohibition.

Saturday, June 23, 1917.

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H. R. 4961) to provide further for the national security and defense by encouraging the production, conserving the supply, and controlling the distribution of food products and fuel.

Mr. HERSEY. Mr. Chairman, the Barkley amendment just adopted is a great victory for the people of this country. I am utterly opposed to the Lenroot amendment, because it would weaken and destroy what the people have asked for and what they have now secured by the Barkley amendment to this bill.

The law-abiding, liberty-loving people of this country, since this Congress has been in session, have been of one voice, and that united voice has demanded of us war prohibition. They have insisted upon the passage of war prohibition that we might thereby win this war.

In February, 1911, Emperor William of Germany reviewed his mighty army. He called before him one of the greatest military bodies then in the world—men educated and trained to arms from the cradle, men who knew all about the arts of war. He had a grand review of a great army, and on this notable occasion addressed his soldiers in the following words:

The next war and the next battle will demand sound nerves on your part. They will be decided by nerves. But those are undermined and endangered from youth upward by indulgence in alcohol.

It is one of the questions of the future for our navy and for our nation. If you educate the people to do without alcohol, I shall have sensible subjects. The nation which takes the smallest quantity of alcohol will win the battles of the future.

Have we learned anything from our enemy? Listen now to what Lloyd-George, of England, recently said:

We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and, so far as I can see, the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink. I have the greatest conviction, based on accumulating evidence, that nothing but root-and-branch methods would be of the slightest avail in dealing with the evil. I believe it is the general feeling that if we are to settle with German militarism we must first of all settle with liquor.

The Baltimore Sun of May 11, 1917, said:

America can not fight this war with the drink traffic hanging to its arm.

Anything less than the Nation's greatest effort for victory will downgrade the Nation's place and spirit. There is no place in the war program for preventable disease, preventable weakness, preventable waste, or preventable death.

And there will be mounting food prices while grain untold is rotted into poison.

Why not do it now? Assert at once the Government's authority; enact the regulations that are obviously needed and add to them as the need of extension becomes apparent.

Better still, enact prohibition for the war. Use the distilleries to make munition alcohol and as a source of power fuel. Use the breweries to pack meat, pack fruit, make vinegar, make ice, and serve other useful ends. They can be adapted to such purposes at small expense.

Take this as a fact already settled: The American people will not be content to tolerate waste and destruction during such a time of sacrifice as there is ahead of us.

Let us stand behind the President and stand behind him armed with our full strength!

Let the experience for the last two years of our allies point out our duty.

Margaret Wintringer, field secretary of the Young People's Civic League and correspondent for Sunday School Times, Christian Herald, and American Issue, in a letter to the Members of this Congress May 5 last, said:

Having spent six months in Europe in 1916 studying temperance conditions in the warring nations as correspondent for the Sunday School Times, Christian Herald, and other prominent church and reform papers, I venture to set before you some of the results of my investigations.

Those countries which imposed prohibition as a military measure at the outset of the war have achieved the greatest military advance, and the measure of military success of each belligerent nation has been in exact proportion to the measure of prohibition of output rather than the measure of restriction and regulation.

The London Daily Chronicle and the London Daily Times both state that Russia's temporary wine, beer, and vodka prohibition gave her startling advantage at the very outset of the war, enabling her to mobilize her army in less than two weeks, and because of Russia's speedy entrance into the war, accomplished under prohibition, Germany

was forced to divide her forces between the east and west, thus saving Paris and possibly London.

When I visited Paris a year after the prohibition by the Government of the manufacture and sale of vodka, Gen. Gallieni affirmed that this drastic action thus early in the war had saved France. The favorable results from the prohibition of absinth led to the recent ban on spirits by the Government on its own initiative.

The failure of Great Britain to follow the example of her allies, Russia and France, when the nation was ready to accept prohibition, disheartened the more patriotic element of the British people, so that that class of her subjects who would naturally have given the Government the most loyal and unselfish service could lend only half-hearted support.

As Mr. Alfred Booth, chairman of the Cunard Line, has declared, "The brewery cart has blocked the ammunition wagon and the wheat truck, and thereby greatly weakened Great Britain's helpfulness to her allies."

It has impoverished her people and hastened the present food stringency by diverting grain which would have provided every man, woman, and child in Great Britain with four quarter loaves of bread every week.

It has forced the British Government to seek loans to finance the war while her people were drinking the cost of three dreadnaughts every five days and every three losing as many lives through drink as went down in the *Lusitania*.

It is an undeniable fact that Great Britain's failure to follow Russia and France has prolonged the war, as shown by the famous "White Paper" issued by the Government containing "Report and statistics of the bad times kept in the shipbuilding, munitions, and transport areas," which lies before me:

First. By handicapping the output of munitions and building transports through loss of time caused by drink—669,000 labor hours lost in one district in March, 1915.

Second. By retarding mobilization, one-third of entire regiments in some instances being incapacitated by drink.

Third. By delaying the transportation of troops to form a juncture with the army of France for the relief of Belgium, the drunkenness of the firemen delaying the sailing of one transport carrying 1,200 troops 24 hours.

The sale of drink in Great Britain during the war has caused an alarming increase of drunkenness among women, resulting in an increased infant mortality so great that since the beginning of the war two babies under 5 years of age have died in Great Britain for every soldier lost at the front.

The drunkenness of the new British Army during mobilization made it impossible to form the juncture with the French Army which might have held the German hordes back from crossing the French frontier, thus changing possible and speedy victory into crawling disaster. So American mothers are to pay Great Britain's drink bill with the life-blood of their sons!

In the face of such sacrifice, when the mothers of this Nation must furnish the millions of soldiers for the country's defense, to refuse the moral protection which national prohibition as a war measure would afford her sons, would be a sin against the mothers of the United States, and would chill the enthusiasm of the millions of women upon whose services in all lines of industry the Nation must depend for the success of its arms.

He brands himself a traitor to the human race who calls a truce in the fight against alcohol now, when health, efficiency, and happiness must be safeguarded as never before. He serves his country best who conserves its young men.

In the face of the experience of the warring nations of Europe, and the price we must pay for their defeat before King Alcohol, the United States can not afford to repeat Great Britain's disastrous experiment with regulation. Nor can we risk dishonor by following Germany's deadly example of restriction, which defeated 40 years of preparedness, blackened her national escutcheon, and wrested victory from her army almost before it had crossed the border.

Without prohibition there will be no victory, and the United States will enter the struggle and sacrifice its young manhood in vain.

In behalf of the motherhood of the Nation, called to a greater sacrifice for country than any Nation in all the world's history has ever asked of its mothers, may we not look to your honorable legislative body for immediate action in defense of our soldiers, with national prohibition as a war measure?

Yours, for protection, which means victory,

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

T. N. Carver, professor of political economy, Harvard University, writing in the Harvard Alumni Bulletin of May 31, 1917, said:

The argument for war prohibition rests partly on economic and partly on moral grounds. The argument on economic grounds is an argument against the waste of foodstuffs and of man power. This is much more convincing than the argument based upon sentimental morality. The waste of foodstuffs is, in itself, a large item, though a small percentage of our total food production. According to the report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue for the year ended June 30, 1916 (p. 138), there were used during that year in the manufacture of distilled spirits over 32,000,000 bushels of corn, over 3,000,000 bushels of rye, over 4,000,000 bushels of malt, and over 152,000,000 gallons of molasses, besides small quantities of wheat, oats, and other materials.

The waste of man power may be regarded as a moral problem, but it is in the strictest sense an economic problem. There are few vices which more speedily and certainly destroy a man's dependableness than alcoholic indulgence. In our interlocking civilization, where we are all so completely dependent upon one another, the most valuable of all our virtues are those which make us dependable, and the most destructive of all vices are those which make us undependable.

As to the men who may be thrown out of employment, they will be needed ten times over before this war is ended to man the necessary industries. We must count on putting as many as 5,000,000 men in the field—it would be silly to count on fewer than that—and it may be necessary to put 10,000,000 in the Army and Navy. It will take another 5,000,000 or 10,000,000 to produce supplies and ships for them. It will take other millions to increase our farm production, our coal and iron production. Many unnecessary industries must absolutely cease to be in order that those necessary for our salvation may be kept going. The industries which produce alcoholic drinks are about the most unnecessary of all our industries.

The New York Times of May 13, 1917, contained an interesting article by Irving Fisher, professor of political economy in Yale University, in which he said:

In regard to the release of labor, there were employed in 1910 in distilleries and breweries about 81,000 men. There are 101,000 bartenders, 68,000 saloonkeepers, and enough others—salesmen and the like—to bring up the total number of persons owing their employment, directly or indirectly, to the liquor business to about 289,000.

Ordinarily the large numbers employed are cited as a reason why prohibition, by dislocating labor, would be injurious, but to-day it is this very release of labor which is needed for the production of food and munitions and for filling the ranks in our Army and Navy. Food scarcity in particular can not be remedied without more farm labor, and the larger the number employed in the liquor business the more man power is lost for prosecuting the war. No one can to-day raise any objection on the ground of unemployment. There is no unemployment problem now in Canada. The curve of unemployment in England is almost down to zero. All labor released would therefore be readily absorbed, to the great benefit of the country, and in most cases probably to the benefit of the labor itself so transferred. Much of it would scarcely change location, for many of the plants of distilleries and breweries could be put to manufacturing industrial alcohol and to other war uses as has been the case in Canada.

As to food, we are facing a real food crisis, due to shortage of crops all over the world, the destruction of crops by war, the withdrawal of food producers to perform military functions, the destruction of food ships by the submarine, and the exhaustion of our food stocks. The sooner we wake up to a realization of what is before us the better.

Nearly 2½ per cent of the total crop of those cereals used in manufacturing alcoholic beverages are diverted to that use, while 5 per cent of the total crop of rice and 34 per cent of the total crop of barley are so diverted.

More than 110,000,000 bushels of grain are used in the production of alcoholic beverages, 415,000,000 pounds of grapes, and 152,000,000 pounds of molasses. In all about 7,500,000,000 pounds of food—grain, grapes, grape sugar, glucose, and molasses—are so used each year. After making allowance for the production of denatured alcohol, the total fuel value so diverted each year is sufficient to supply the yearly energy requirement of over 7,000,000 men.

Even after making allowance for all recovered food substances, such as swill for feeding farm animals, there is still wasted enough grain alone

to give a 1-pound loaf every day to every soldier in an army of 11,000,000 men! This is the calculation of Dr. Alonzo Taylor, who has been making a study of the world's food situation by personal investigation in Germany and England and the United States.

As to the commercial uses of alcohol, prohibition would enable us to utilize distilleries and breweries in the production of ether, so necessary now for surgical operations in the military hospitals, and of acetone for the making of explosives, as well as of pure alcohol for fuel and other purposes. Pure alcohol now costs \$2.40 a gallon, of which \$2 is tax. The tax has been removed in Europe. It is estimated, so a chemist tells me, that about 1 pound of alcohol is necessary in the manufacture of every pound of powder.

In regard to cold storage, the plants of breweries could be used for cold storage of foods, and it is believed that we are somewhat short on cold-storage facilities.

The Daily Kennebec Journal, a great newspaper published in my State, said editorially April 25, 1917:

We are entering a war for right and justice over might and greed, equality of human rights over autocratic domination. We smite our breasts and boast our high purpose to save humanity from mammon, while in our hearts is the hypocrisy of unconquered appetites and passions.

Staggering and bewildered by narcotic poison, 25 per cent deficient in human fighting ability, to say nothing of lack of training or inadequate mechanical equipment, we offer combat to a fighting enemy, depending on our size, doggedness, and luck, a "country that has never been defeated," except by its own lusts and longings.

Bluntly, are we to swagger into the arena, one-fourth paralyzed by drink, with a rum bottle in our pocket and a determination to fight on "Dutch courage"?

Here are a few facts to consider in their tremendous possibilities: Exclusive of our loans to the allies we can hardly expect to expend in our first year of the war the sum of \$2,000,000,000. Yet in that same 12 months we shall expend for drink, every ounce of it worse than useless to any human being, the amount in dollars of two billions five hundred millions.

National prohibition as an emergency measure would save this to the Nation, and all the incompetence and misery which its use would entail.

In other words, we could save by restraining our own folly, in the first 12 months of war, food enough to fully feed for one year any army that we shall be able to raise in the next three years.

National prohibition as an emergency war measure would release for productive uses an army of many thousands of men now engaged in a nationally destructive labor. We need these men on the farms to raise food, where they are now engaged in destroying what others raise.

National prohibition as an emergency war measure would instantly be felt—as it was in Russia—in a new efficiency and morale in the army, and in the people as an awakening from "booze" stupor that holds millions every hour in its grasp the while disheartening other millions close to them.

Look at the facts in the case of these three—food, labor, financial strength:

The greatest destroyer of food in this country now, and in England, France, and Russia before the war, is drink.

The greatest destroyer of labor in this country, as it was in Europe before the war, is drink.

And when we come to financial strength we find that the drink waste every year is sufficient to build:

One hundred battleships, costing \$7,500,000 each, and 200 armored cruisers, costing \$6,000,000 each, and 500 destroyers, costing \$1,000,000 each, and 1,000 submarines, costing \$10,000 each.

Can the American people drag this stupendous burden and win the war?

Here is a final illustration: The sum expended for drink in this country every 12 months would board at \$1 a day each every man, woman, and child in the Nation for almost one month.

I am pleased that gentlemen in this Congress who oppose prohibition to-day in this debate admit and acknowledge that the passage of this bill with the Barkley amendment will destroy the manufacture and the sale of intoxicating liquors in this Nation during the war.

We must win this war. To do it we must first put away our Nation's shame—the legalized liquor traffic. To-day this House has sounded forth the trumpet that will never call retreat. War prohibition will give us a sober Nation and we will at once proceed to give to the people a constitutional amendment that will give us in times of peace protection from our greatest enemy and complete national prohibition. To-morrow the saloon will be only a hateful memory.

God is calling to the masses, to the peasant, and the peer;
He is calling to all classes, that the crucial hour is near;
For each rotting throne must tremble and fall broken in the dust,
With the leaders who dissemble and betray a people's trust.

Still the voice of God is calling, and above the wreck I see,
And beyond the gloom appalling, the great government-to-be.
From the ruins it has risen, and my soul is overjoyed,
For the school supplants the prison, and there are no "unemployed."

And there are no children's faces at the spindle or the loom;
They are out in sunny places, where the other sweet things bloom;
God has purified the alleys, He has set the white slaves free.
And they own the hills and valleys in this government-to-be.

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