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A Good Start.

THE Forty-eighth Legislature has made a start which promises the happiest results in respect both to the administration of the domestic affairs of the State and to the mustering of Texas' resources behind the Nation's war effort. The good feeling evidenced at Austin as the session opened and the State's official family gathered for the business of policy making and lawmaking was of the sort to banish misgivings and multiply hopes that Texas' already magnificent performance in the war will be even further enhanced as increasing demands are made upon us, along with all other States, to measure up to the high standard of patriotism and selflessness set by Texas fighting men on every front. For this newly electrified atmosphere of fellowship in realization of the job before us, every member of the two houses, as well as the newly installed executive officers of the State, are to be congratulated.

Especially is there significance in the attitude attested without variation in each of the official utterances which attended the opening of the Legislature and the inauguration of a new biennium of the State's government. First Governor Stevenson and Lieutenant Governor Smith addressed all Texans in a preinauguration broadcast. Then Speaker Price Daniel, who had just been unanimously chosen to this important post by the House, repeated and re-emphasized the main points of the two previous addresses. The theme was continued in the Governor's message.

This theme is that Texas, realizing to the fullest degree the responsibility of all Americans in the war, will do everything in its power to hasten victory and nothing to delay it or render it less certain. In keeping with this resolve, Texas will continue to insist that the knocking down of individual and State's rights be kept within the limits of necessity, and, pointedly will not be satisfied until the National Government fulfills its own obligation to the Armed Forces by adoption of policies and enactment of laws which will do away with disgraceful slacking on the home front in the field of war production.

As was emphasized by Lieutenant Governor Smith in his radio address, the Government has not yet moved with either the positiveness or the promptness required for preventing work stoppages in war industry, arising both from organized strikes and from the newer slacker technique of "absenteeism."

It is true that strikes in the last year were fewer than before Pearl Harbor, and it is true that no strikes have been ordered by national labor union officials who voluntarily pledged abandonment of the strike weapon for the duration of the war. But there have been sporadic work stoppages, resulting from local walkouts arising from jurisdictional and other disputes. Right now approximately 10,000 coal miners are out and have not returned to work despite appeals from high-ranking Government officials, and despite the immense war need for coal. Large numbers of war workers, even in industries so directly related to the fate of our soldiers as is airplane building, have failed to show up following holidays, hundreds have absented themselves on the opening of the hunting season, and many others have stayed away from their jobs for personal reasons often cynically and flippantly asserted. Such absentees recently have caused more lost production hours than the old-fashioned strike.

All but a small minority of war workers, it is cheering to report, have shown themselves fully conscious of their obligation. From the over-all standpoint, working America has done and is doing a fine job. But the point is that when American boys are fighting and dying in the deserts of North Africa, in the jungles of New Guinea and the Solomons and on the seas there should be no strikes, no labor stoppages, no unnecessary absences from the job whatever, especially since ample machinery has been provided for equitable settlement of differences and grievances.

No doubt the workers who absented themselves on the morning after a holiday, on the opening of the hunting season, or for personal but avoidable reasons, did not regard their absence in the light of what it might mean to a soldier or sailor facing the enemy. But lost production hours, whether due to the action of enemy saboteurs or to the lack of conviction on the part of our own workers, are lost just the same. If such unconvinced Americans can not quickly realize that absence from work in a war industry is a serious offense against the Nation's safety; if they can not understand that the right to "lay-off" a day or so whenever the whim strikes does not exist in wartime; if appeals to their patriotism are without effect—the Government should act speedily and positively.

In this war there is no more room for "monkey business" on the home front than on the battle front. Whatever hampers or delays the flow of weapons and supplies to our fighting men is sabotage, no matter what excusing label may be applied to it. And whoever stands in the way of our soldiers who are fighting for their lives and for our defense—whatever the high-sounding excuses by which justification is attempted—commits the worst crime an American can be guilty of. The Government should crack down on the enemy hiding at home in the same fashion and with the same effectiveness as the American soldier "takes care" of the enemy who openly faces him on the battle line.

For Victory: Buy Bonds

The Governor's Message.

GOVERNOR STEVENSON'S message to the Legislature was notably a war message in that it lacked the "reform," tax and spending proposals that have been so marked in recommendations of Texas Governors during the last 10 years. Evidently, the war intrudes itself upon the depression expediency of State Government playing Santa Claus to any organized pressure group.

Among the important suggestions offered by the Governor were a "strict policy of economy," no new taxes, improvement of election laws to eliminate the farce of candidates' expense reporting, redistricting, and revision of budget laws. One proposal, that for elimination of unnecessary district courts, although sound, will hardly be put into effect. The recommendation that the state auditor be a legislative rather than an executive office is calculated to increase the independence and usefulness of that office.

Until the amendment restricting deficit spending from the general fund becomes operative, the State Legislature will still be in a position to increase that debt, which already totals $31,000,000. Likewise, until the Legislature reduces state taxes by the elimination of many state bureaus, payrolls and other factors of cost, it can not be said that State Government has gone on a wartime basis.

Revenue from prevailing taxes will decline during the war, and delinquencies will mount after the public begins paying increased federal war levies. There are only three possible ways for meeting this situation: Increase in certain taxes that will be collectible, rise in the general fund deficit, or reduction in the cost of state government. The last course is the only sound, patriotic procedure that takes into consideration the condition of the times and the people.

Although war was imminent long before the attack upon Pearl Harbor, the Legislature still enacted the omnibus tax law, and even after America's forced entry into war, the State Board of Education forced a doubling of the state property tax for school purposes. It is earnestly hoped that the Legislature and state administrative government have at last awakened to the necessity for reducing taxes in keeping with the war emergency. State taxes and government "as usual" hardly fit the difficult times that lie ahead.

Just Folks—Edgar A. Guest

TRAITS.

THESE gifts are all within our reach;
And can be had as we desire;
The lilt of courage in our speech
A faith that doesn't quickly tire;

A quiet patience under stress,
A brave obedience to command.
Contentment with a little less;
For all who need a helping hand.

Some gifts there are requiring skill
And those are granted to the few,
But who for kindness has the will
Instinctively knows what to do.

And who for courage has the heart
And is to freedom consecrate
Will uncomplaining play his part
And patiently for victory wait.

The State of the Union---II

—Dorothy Thompson

Editor's Note: Dorothy Thompson's column ably and forcefully expresses her opinions, which are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

In his speech to Congress on the State of the Union, the President carefully avoided going into any details about the future peace, and suggested that it would be well for all of us "at this critical period to confine ourselves to the larger objectives and not get bogged down in argument over methods and details."

At this stage of the war, this is certainly common sense advice. Yet the President himself did make two positive statements regarding post-war policy, as it affects our present enemies, the Axis. The first was that after the war we shall maintain the present grand alliance, United States-Britain-Russia-China, together with the smaller United Nations, and disarm and keep disarmed Germany, Italy and Japan.

The main idea dominating the President's thoughts is security, security in the domestic life, and security in international life; permanent protection against the possibility of aggression ever happening again. The President does not believe that "magnificent idealism" will afford us this security, or that we can "maintain peace by good intentions alone." He apparently believes that any future menace might come from the Axis powers alone, since the United Nations are bound together "in solemn agreement that they themselves will not commit acts of aggression or conquest against any of their neighbors." He accepts the thesis that the roots of trouble, in the future as in the present, will remain permanently the same.

Now, on this, it might be well to have a little historical perspective.

The first aggressions in this war were committed by two nations who were our allies in the last one: Japan and Italy. So the idea that a beaten enemy will always be the first again to take up arms is not necessarily correct. Japan and Italy emerged from the last war as victors dissatisfied with their victory. Mussolini, who emerged into power to turn Italy into an aggressive, imperialistic state, was the very man, who in the previous war had contributed most to leading Italy into the camp of the Allies.

Furthermore, both Italy and Japan were committed to keeping the peace after the last war. They were members from the beginning of the League of Nations and signed all the "solemn agreements" to outlaw war which were so numerous in the twenties.

Germany and her Central European allies were unilaterally disarmed after the last war, and for years there were international commissions busy seeing that they remained disarmed. Nevertheless, they rearmed eventually, in a tremendous way, and with the open or tacit consent of some of their former allies. At no point did either Britain, Russia or the United States oppose German rearmament. For years the Russian government allowed the Germans to test out new arms in Russia. Britain went so far as to make a naval treaty with Germany, allowing her many new ships, including submarines, after Hitler had declared the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty null and void.

France alone, and the small countries surrounding Germany, were for security by permanent German disarmament.

Now, why did this happen?

The real reason was that the victorious powers after the last war immediately began to play at balance of power politics amongst themselves. When France appeared too mighty in the balance of power situation, they closed their eyes to the coming up of Germany. Russia wanted to keep the Western powers divided because she feared an anti-Communist crusade, and therefore tried to intensify the antagonisms between Germany and the Western powers, and even to back up Germany as a sort of buffer state. Mussolini, having tried to get concessions by the consent of Britain and France, and hoping for fish out of troubled waters, troubled the waters, and the best way to do that was to back Germany.

Finally, even the democratic elements in Germany felt the injustice and insecurity of a disarmed nation in the midst of a highly armed world.

The point in rehashing this history is only to get a realistic view of the future. There is, on the record, no assurance that a grand alliance will outlast 10, 20 or 30 years, if it is only a negative alliance to prevent the rise again of one's late enemies, and not a positive collaboration for the creation of a new world. And, if the second is the aim, then it must be accompanied by every effort to dissolve old antagonisms and integrate former enemies into a new and higher entity of the world.

If the disarmament of our enemies is to be regarded as the last step in the war, we will all agree. But if it is to be regarded as the first step in making a truly constructive peace, then I greatly fear it will turn out to be the first step toward the next war.