DANGER IN OPTIMISM

Senator New Reflects Opinion of Official Washington in Deploiring Prophecies that War Will End Soon

A

n authoritative warning has been sounded from Washington against the well meaning but misguided optimism which pictures the war as approaching an end, with the Germans soon to be forced to a desperate defense of their own borders and then shortly to be hurled back on Berlin itself. "It is no time to talk about the war being over," said the army's Chief of Staff. After he had expressed this opinion an inquiry into the attitude of those who ought to know disclosed the fact that everybody of importance at the National Capital agreed with him.

Boastful and over-optimistic prophecies, in short, are regarded in Government circles as not only foolish, but dangerous. We are just getting into the war; it is only within the last few weeks that we have put enough men at the battlefront to render notable assistance, and it was only last week that news came from the other side that our first field army had been organized. Henceforward demands upon us are to increase manifold. In order to meet these, to contain the energies of the country as before, there must be at the bottom, it is asserted, the motive power of a deep national purpose, and this cannot be attained by a shallow conception of the colossal effort now facing the American armies.

Nothing will tend to break the grip of the Allies' purpose so much as the idea that the war is to end soon, according to the men who are running our part in the war. An illustration: A manufacturer from the Middle West who employs a considerable number of men arrived in Washington last week with plans for the output of his plant. In the discussion at the capital next Spring was mentioned.

"But," said the manufacturer to the official, "the war will be over by next Spring."

He held this idea so strongly that it had begun to affect his plans for the near future; instead of seeing a greater effort ahead, he saw a lessening effort, and, of course, those with whom he came in contact, especially his employees, were similarly affected, to a greater or less degree. The man was ardent and loyal; little had he realized, in optimistically spreading an idea that was without any foundation, that he was following a course which would have received the enthusiastic approval of German propagandists.

The manufacturer's environment may have been the same as that described by some of the celebrators who had begun to count the weeks before the boys would be back from the trenches in France. On the next day a Louisville afternoon newspaper carried a great black headline: '400,000 Huns Trapped.' On the logical foundation, that he was following a course which would have received the enthusiastic approval of German propagandists.

Photograph from the Training Camp at Fort Sill, Okla., Showing a Group of Browning Machine Guns Such as Will Be Aimed at the Germans from Every Yard of the American Front in France.

VAST NUMBERS OF THESE GUNS WILL BE USED.

A REVIEW OF UNITED STATES TROOPS IN FRANCE.

Major General T. Dickman and Brigadier General Clayton Watching Manoeuvres of the Third Division.

Washington man who recently returned from Kentucky.

"At one of the smaller railroad stations," he said, "we saw a procession coming down to the train, with banners and music. 'What are you celebrating?' asked a passenger from a car window. 'We just received great war news by phone from Louisville,' was the answer. 'We've got the Kaiser licked.' No doubt following day a proclamation was issued by the Mayor, as I recall it, warning the people against giving credence to false reports about war successes and pointing out the harmful demoralization that the spread of such reports caused.

Similar experiences are related with regard to other States. Back of it all is something wholly creditable to the people of this country—joy at the news that our boys have shown their nestle, that they have a style of fighting all their own, that in alien surroundings, portrayed as very hell for three years, they have shown true fearless American initiative. And nobody wishes to lessen joyful reception of good war news. But there should be discrimination between justified rejoicing and the drawing of false or grossly exaggerated conclusions from such news and then giving them circulation. Deep and unfeigned enthusiasm over the progress of the allied arms, a conviction that in the end, by steady, unyielding effort, the Germans will be put to utter rout, is a source of daily strength for all. But superficial optimism which sees each new advance of the Allies as the beginning of the end is deprecated in official circles.

Our popular estimate that it would require 1,000,000 men to defeat the Germans, in addition to what the French and English had, was all wrong. Later we calculated that 3,000,000 would be required. Now the plans, in a clearer conception of the reality of the situation, have risen to an army of 5,000,000, and it may be necessary to go higher. It is evident that only the foolish optimist now arrives at an overestimation of the damage inflicted on the enemy by the present allied successes and infers that anything like a vital blow has been dealt to the Germans, or is to be dealt in the immediate future.

Members of both political parties in Washington are outspoken on the dangers of over-confidence. Senator Harry S. New of Indiana, when asked his opinion the other day, said: "I think there could be nothing more harmful to the allied cause than for the American people to get the idea because of the successes of the last few weeks the beginning of the end is in sight."

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THE GERMAN PARENT WITH SIX UNINJURED SONS.

To a German mother who had lost nine sons in the war, Emperor William II as follows: "His Majesty is immensely gratified..." and in recognition is recently sent his photograph. The gift was accompanied by a letter, reading in part: "pleased to send you his photograph, with frame and autograph signature."