

Duties of Schools When Nation Is at War

New York State Sets Example in Encouraging Teachers to Inform Pupils About America's Aims—Lineup of the Colleges

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Proposed Liberty Loan Medal for Essay Contest in the Schools.

of the nation. For in this service I am coming to think of every school not only as a community centre but a national centre.

In this day of the nation's war need we must firmly establish and practice this relationship that, in the days of a great peace need, the schools will be ready for a service comparable with that which they are, even now rising to give in the promotion of their country's defense.

It is on this common foundation of training that we are to form the "sacred union" of all Americans, to save and serve America and, through America, the world, for the freedom of which we are now fighting. And what an opportunity and responsibility comes to the teacher. It is so great an opportunity, so grave a responsibility, that one cannot seek to teach in these days from any low motive. I wonder how there can be petty squabbling or personal haggling on their part or that of boards of education in the face

of such opportunities and responsibilities. There has come out of the crisis a realization of the supreme importance of the teacher and a recognition which we must rise to meet.

Our schoolmaster President has made a special appeal to the teachers, asking them to aid "a deeper understanding of the meaning and aims of democracy" and the "problems of national life." "These . . . lessons of the war," he says, "must be learned quickly if we are intelligently and successfully to defend our institutions."

There is danger that we shall find our own minds distracted and our long-cherished moral values disturbed by the events of the war, but there is greater danger that we shall fail to take advantage of the new values that are rising, that we shall be blind to opportunities for spiritual enrichment and industrial renovations, that we shall go on living and teaching in a narrow, selfish, horizon when the most momentous days in the world's history are coming to one eternally and going into the other. If we are beyond the age of the draft, we are none of us beyond self-conscription. It is to the teachers after the soldiers and the men who are to feed and equip them that the President has made his first special appeal that we conscript ourselves.

There is a twofold obligation on the teacher. First, it is essential that we defend the intellectual frontiers of our democracy. We must "dig ourselves into" their trenches and hold them. Second, the schools, public and private, teachers and pupils alike, must take an active part in helping the nation in the fight.

With regard to the first obligation: We must teach the truth about the war. Teachers must instill and nourish in their millions of pupils a spirit of unselfish sacrifice, to the end that they shall be united in support of this world cause which President Wilson defined for all of us and for all time when he said:

The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by irresponsible Government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practices and long-cherished principles of international action and honor; which chose its own time for the war; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly; stomped at no barrier either of law or of mercy; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also, and of the helpless, of the poor—and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world.

The children who are here gathered from many peoples must know with what high purpose and from compelling motive we have entered this world conflict. Our answer to their questions must be the

answer we make to our own secret selves and to our God. It is a solemn task and must be performed as conscientiously as we teach the rules of arithmetic.

It is much that is required of the teacher beyond that which is named in the contract. But, as much as is required, we must constantly remember the sacrifices of those who have had to leave their homes, their business, their ambitions, for a pittance. And, besides, we must remember many are offering their lives.

The teachers, every one of whom has taken the oath of office as a loyal servant of the State, must become the living voice of the Government. In France I saw posted everywhere on the bulletin boards, in city and village, the most recent of the many proclamations and decrees of the central and local Governments of France.

Here were the words of advice, or warning, or appeal, or command. And these proclamations, I was told, were read and expounded to the children and villagers alike by the school teachers. In like manner, teachers are chosen to be the voice of our Government, national and State. The words of the President, the appeals of the Council of National Defense, the needs of the Red Cross, must reach every ear in the Republic, and teachers as no one else can see that directly, or through the children, every home in the community is reached.

The second duty of the schools, as I have said, is action; participation in war work, not only for the sake of the war but for the sake of the schools as well. The accomplishment of this duty depends on the whole-hearted co-operation of every man, woman, and child in the State and in the nation. From the Government official to the tiniest child in the kindergarten, each American must do his share. We must act and make our contribution to the various agencies now mobilized in support of our armies in the field. And the schools have an unequalled opportunity to be the voice of the Government reaching into every home.

Much has been done in the schools of New York. Food conservation has been practically demonstrated all over the State; farm cadets have been organized and trained in the work of food production, (nearly 20,000 have already reported as giving such service;) vocational schools have adapted much of their work to the nation's need. Red Cross work has been introduced into the curriculum of many schools; provision has been made for junior membership of school children in the National Red Cross and the organization of a Red Cross Junior Chapter wherever there is a school. The Red Cross officials in Washington have accepted as a working basis for a national committee of the American Red Cross on junior membership and school activities the plan submitted by the New York State Education Department, which was the outgrowth of what we did in this State six weeks before the declaration of war.

In the State of New York, alone, are enrolled in public schools nearly 2,000,000 pupils, of whom 50,000 are girls between 12 and 16, in training under special teachers for sewing and cooking. Rooms were equipped for their instruction in 150 cities and towns under the direction of more than a thousand trained teachers. Additional activities are planned in many schools for the year, such as the serving

of luncheons from the school kitchens and the teaching of mothers how best to purchase, plan, and prepare nourishing meals under the restrictions of wartime food supply.

It is essential to realize that the plan which has been tried successfully in the State of New York public schools is one not primarily for production, as such, however desirable this object may be, but for education. Children are in school to learn.

This suggestive beginning thus made in the vocational classes in the State of New York has received high and universal sanction by the President's Junior Red Cross proclamation. It is indicative of a broad and worthy trend in the public schools to allow all children to feel that they are not negligible units in the service of our country, but that they, too, can help in a time of widespread stress and need.

The schools of this State are now giving efficient help in the flotation of the new Liberty bonds. The United States Treasury Department has prepared, in

co-operation with the Liberty Loan Committee of the Second Federal Reserve District and the university, a source book of information regarding the loan. This book gives in a compact way instructions and information about Government bonds, as well as information about the resources of the country. A copy of it has been placed in the hands of every teacher in the State.

The teachers have been intrusted with an important share in the Second Liberty Loan campaign. They have been asked to serve as information centres and agents for the Treasury Department in the dissemination of accurate knowledge concerning the loan throughout every community where a school exists or where a teacher resides. They have been ordered to arrange for public meetings in the interests of the loan in every school building or district, to follow up a home canvass or reach each home through the pupils. The work is undertaken, not as a plain patriotic duty alone, but also as a most valuable method of teaching the current needs of our country—thrift, sound finance, and patriotism.

A medal of honor has been designed to be awarded for the best essay by the school children of various localities on any subject connected with the Liberty Loan. Teachers have been urging the children to compete for the prize, for it is believed that it will be of inestimable service to the loan to interest the school children in this way.

Higher schools and universities have, of course, made a greater tangible contribution to the common defense. Scientific laboratories have been generally put at the disposal of the Government; some Faculties have been reorganized for es-

ential national service; the training of aviators and officers is in part delegated to certain universities. An exhibit of what has been done by the universities and colleges of the State is to be made at the convocation of the universities of the State of New York, Oct. 18 and 19. Many college Presidents and professors sit on the great advisory boards of the War and Navy Departments. But the higher schools must in the end, like the rest of the nation, depend on the spirit the pupil is imbued with in the primary grades.

The tribute of our European allies to the effort of America is generous beyond our deserts. France was profoundly moved by the pledge of President Wilson of help, even to the last man of our population and the last dollar of our resources. England, expecting only financial and naval aid, was impressed by our prompt and efficient action in the formation of a great army and aviation service, in our practical and prompt measures for increasing food production, and by our mobilization of science and industry.

"Throughout all France," said the Minister of Public Instruction, Albert Sarraut, as nearly as I can paraphrase his utterances, "the school forms the moral centre of the country, and, although age or sex keeps many of them far from the front, our teachers have earned the title of 'soldiers of the interior' by essential service, for which the country owes them a particular gratitude. The day will come when the walls of each school will bear a double citation; on the one side the glorious list of its dead, its wounded, of those who have won promotion or citation on the field of honor; on the other side the list of patriotic and charitable tasks, freely undertaken by the non-mobilized teachers and their pupils. The school

deserves praise for seeing the immensity of the struggle into which we have been drawn and for planning and undertaking on a scale somewhat commensurate thereto.

The dream of a better America in which all—soldier and civilian alike—are brothers in arms; in which democracy is a religion rather than a quasi-fiction of Government; in which love of country is a supreme passion; in which the duties of citizenship are coequal with the privileges of citizens—all this is not beyond the reach of the imagination. It represents a national transformation that in Belgium and France, at least, has largely become fact, a national spirit that in France has received the christening of the "union sacrée," in which individual selfishness, strife, and bitterness have been lost in the supreme devotion to the nation's suffering.

Is such a "sacred union" of all Americans possible? It should be remembered that this is not a merely academic question. It is a practical military question of the greatest moment. It is the question of the morale of the nation which includes our great unorganized reserve and our subsistence and munitions services, on which military success in the end depends.

The military strength of France lies not so much in the marvelous "75's," in the speedy "Nieuports," in trench guns, curtains of fire, or in tanks, as in the moral strength and spiritual unity of the French people. And I speak especially of France, because I have seen France and have not seen England since the first weeks of the war.

The unity is not forced. It is the

product of their innate love of their homeland, fostered and developed by a wise national education. France has been obliged to improvise armies, to improvise munitions; she has not been obliged to improvise spirit. Moral and patriotic instruction has for years formed the heart of national education there. The entire body of studies has been humanized and nationalized in being used as the medium in which the French spirit develops and attains full power and stature. The sacred union was born of the basic moral ideas taught in the schools of the republic. It proved its power in the fellowship of the trenches. It passed again reinforced from the trenches back to the schools through hospitals, through schools for the wounded, through letters from teacher-soldiers, and is now being transmitted in the schools from the army of present defense to the army of future defense.

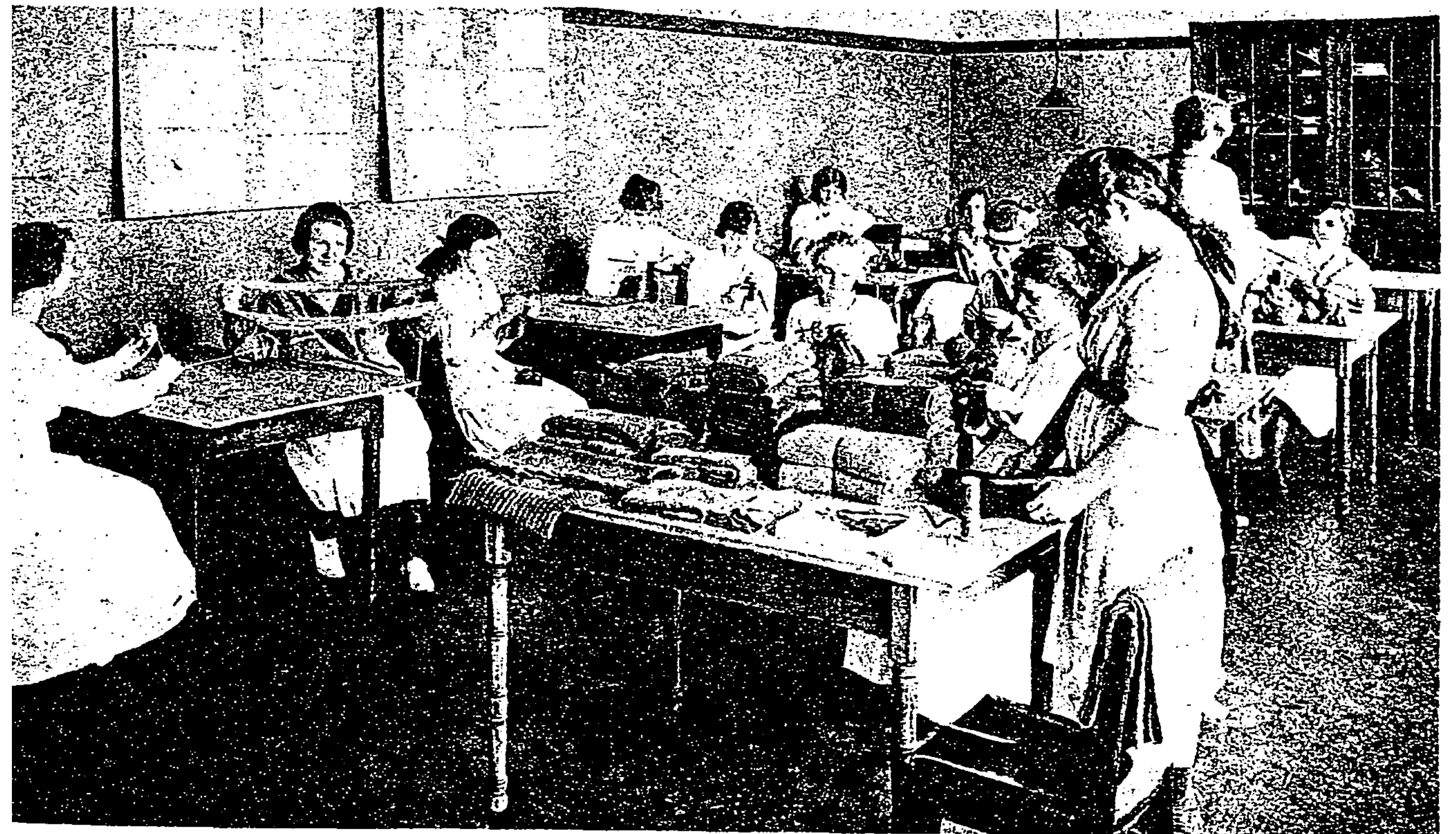
There can be no doubt that America

is France herself. The truths which the school needs in the great conflict the school makes known everywhere. The immense energy needed to suppress any moment of weakness, the moral instruction and example of the university labors to maintain and develop. More than any other class teachers are responsible for the contagion of their spirit."

We in New York who have been intrusted with the administration of the schools would have every teacher serve the nation as unselfishly as any soldier in the army of present defense. There are approximately as many teachers in the State of New York as there are New York men in the first contingent of the National Army; a teacher in the army of future defense for every soldier in the army of present defense. And what an army this is; this unseen mighty army which is helping to make a democracy worth saving by the other army! We who must remain at our posts of future defense cannot let these momentous days in the world's history pass without doing our part to help bring in our own day that peace which will make the world a safe place hereafter for those whom we teach.

And the places where the soldiers of the Army of Future Defense are to be trained in body, in mind, in spirit, and in the ideals of democracy are the schools, every one of which, I repeat, must become a national centre as well as a community centre.

It is difficult for those who have not seen in the sky the smoke of battle, or heard its thunders, to know that we are at war, but that far horizon which we can see only in our imagination is very real, and it is ours, not only collectively, but individually.



Girls in a Troy Vocational School Knitting for the Soldiers.