ONE YEAR OF HOOVER'S CONTROL: FOOD ENOUGH FOR ALL ALIES

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One Year of Hoover's Food Control

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giving their sons to immolation on the national altar."

Mr. Hoover took a chance on his faith in the American people. That is the uncertain quantity he undertook to deal with, on a hazard that a mere Prussian materialist would have regarded as inexcusably reckless; the response of the American people to the appeal for voluntary conservation is the one part of the food saving that cannot be explained; it is too deep for that; they did not have to—something utterly unintelligible to the Prussian materialist, but it is sufficient to say that Mr. Hoover's faith was justified. It is assured that the Allies' needs will be provided for until the next harvest, and there is food enough for the American people.

A rationing system in the United States would face many more difficulties than it does in Europe. Fifty per cent. of the people of the United States are either producers or live in close contact with the producer, and effective restraint on their consumption by rationing would be a problem no European food administrator has had to face; in Germany, however, this very phase of the problem has presented the worst difficulties. In addition, owing to the great variety in habits of consumption among the industrial population, another difficulty would be raised in employing a rationing system. In some parts of the South workers consume no more than two pounds of wheat a week, using other and less needed substitutes for the nutrient qualities of that cereal, while in some parts of the North the worker uses eight pounds of wheat a week. In this commodity a rationing system would force more wheat on the Southern worker than he wants and would cut the supply of the Northern worker below what he needs.

A third consideration is that a rationing system would impose a great cost on the Government.

In Mr. Hoover's opinion only some un-

The rationing system weighs heavily both on the people and on the administrator of it, and in this country the possibility of its introduction can be made more remote by increased simplicity of living and the elimination of all waste. Mr. Hoover thinks that the comparative short term of office of European Food Commissioners is due largely to the friction that is caused by the enforcement of the rationing system.

The crop prospects are full of encouragement, but the same self-denial will be necessary by the American people even if there are bumper yields. A surplus is needed to face the future without apprehension. Food saving also increases the shipping space for the Allies and our own troops; the more food that is conserved in this country the more ships can be withdrawn from the longer routes, as to South America. It takes a ship twice as long to go from an allied port to Argentina as it does to come to this country or to Canada; in addition, the danger of loss from submarine is greater. Just recently, on account of the greater demand for ships by the United States and the Allies, it has been necessary to make withdrawals from the long route to Argentina. Later, emphasizing how food and ships and winning the war are becoming more and more closely interrelated, 50,000 tons of shipping have been withdrawn from the sugar trade between Cuba and the United States. These ships were transferred to the service of the Allies, whose needs are pressing. It may be necessary to reduce our present consumption of sugar by 15 per cent.

Mr. Hoover's sway over the staff of the Food Administration might lead one to expect what is called a "tremendous personality." On the contrary, you hardly know he is in the room until you get right up to his desk, and he is shaking hands, with a trace of a smile. He does not emphasize what he says with clenched fist, as a master of men is expected to do. As he talks, you do not think of Hoover at all, but wholly of the food needs of the Allies and ourselves; you apprehend those needs as never before, and Hoover seems to have forgotten himself. That is probably the secret of it—he has forgotten himself, and he makes others forget themselves, first the circle of his associates, and through them the greater circle of the nation—thus achieving the necessary food conservation by self-denial instead of by compulsion.