

# DANGER IN OPTIMISM

## Senator New Reflects Opinion of Official Washington in Deploring 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 battlefield 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 converge the energies of the country as never 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 employes, were similarly affected, to a greater or less degree. The man was ardently loyal; little had he realized, in optimistically spreading an idea that was without



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### VAST NUMBERS OF THESE GUNS WILL BE USED.

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.

logical 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 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



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### A REVIEW OF UNITED STATES TROOPS IN FRANCE.

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

a 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 mettle, that they have a style of fighting all their own, that in alien surroundings, portrayed as a 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 abiding 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 war work. The 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 that because of the successes of the last few weeks the beginning of the end is in sight. I

would not for an instant underestimate the accomplishments of the latest great allied offensive. It has been splendid, magnificent—all that could have been expected of any drive. Every Englishman should be proud, every Frenchman gratified, and every American thrilled with the conduct of

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THE GERMAN PARENT WITH SIX UNINJURED SONS.



THE GERMAN PARENT WHOSE NINE SONS DIED FOR THE FATHERLAND.

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

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their respective troops that resulted from the second attempt of the Germans to cross the Marne, but that splendid result does not mean that the enemy retreat is to continue indefinitely or that the Huns have been overcome.

"It is well to recall that it is only about a month from the time, four years ago, when the Germans were at the Marne, and that they were driven back quite as precipitately as they were this time, until they brought up at their new line. At the end of four years they were once more on the banks of that historic river, and the whole thing had to be done over again. It is for us to feel that, no matter how many times this may happen, the forces of the Allies will continue their resistance and their attack, and that there shall never be a letup until there is a complete allied victory, whether the Hun is twice or a dozen times at the Marne before that end is reached.

"I don't believe he can ever come that far again, but it will not do for us to feel for a moment that he is weakening. It will be better for us to indulge the fear that he may return, and by constant effort and the greatest possible organization of our strength make conditions such that we shall have a force capable of keeping constantly at him until he is forced out of any position from which he can again advance.

"In my opinion we are going to have to fight it out on the Western front. I believe it is a military impossibility for the Allies ever to re-establish an eastern battlefield. They certainly cannot do it without the most active co-operation of Russia, and I don't believe Russia is in a situation, or can be put

in a situation in the next year or two, to make its co-operation of any particular value. At the same time, in planning the army that will be required we must take into account the probability of Germany's being able to turn to account the great man power of Russia. We all hope that Germany will never be able to accomplish this, but it is a military axiom that the most remote possibilities must always be taken into account and preparations made against them.

"Those who think the Germans are done for should turn to history and read of the many instances where an army has been apparently vanquished and through lack of ability of the attacking party to complete the victory has been able to make a recovery, and even eventually to win. The man who is full of uncontrollable enthusiasm today, because of the great news that has been coming to us for the last several weeks, should learn a lesson from the overconfidence of the Germans. In the great German offensive of March 21 the Germans took more than 100,000 prisoners and 1,000 guns, and it is more than possible that the Germans lost more heavily this time because of overconfidence on account of their success in drives previous to the last one. But the Allies were not finished by the admitted disaster which overtook them—not a bit of it. This time the tables are reversed, and we have inflicted a blow that is staggering in its force and effect. But there is no more reason for us to flatter ourselves that the Hun cannot recover than it was for him to feel that the Allies were done for at the close of the March offensive. A Hun will not be done for until he is dead.

"While holding to the idea that we are going to win, we must at the same

time provide all that is necessary to make a successful finish of this thing. The German Army can and will fight on the defense a long time. If it should end sooner than we expect, so much the better.

"With a force such as the United States proposes to put over there, I believe we can go through the German line whenever we want to, but it will take that force. I mean the eighty divisions for service over there—the army program of ninety-eight divisions all

told. I think we shall win the war. The United States is the determining factor, but it can't be done unless the ninety-eight division program is carried out. So any expectations based on the ending of the war next Spring are not founded on good reasoning. The Allies must have large preponderance of men and material, and must be prepared not only to take the offensive, but to continue it without check until decisive and complete defeat is inflicted on the Germans."