

WSM, SEPTEMBER 3, 1944

Good Morning, Friends:

For another week, Washington has been figuratively standing up and cheering the triumphant onrush of allied troops in France. It seems from here that the battle of France is about over and that the next struggle will be the seige of Germany itself.

In contemplation of victory, both the House and the Senate have now passed the Reconversion Bill and ^a ~~the~~ Bill to dispose of surplus government property. The House passed its own bill on reconversion last Thursday after refusing to agree to the provisions of the Senate Bill providing up to \$200 ^{per person} to pay the return home travel expenses of war workers. Several people have expressed surprise that Senator George of Georgia and a majority of the Senate would support such a provision. It found very little support in the House of Representatives. No one was able to explain to the satisfaction of an overwhelming majority of the members ^{of Congress} why the government, with its already huge debt and burdensome taxes, should be called upon to pay the ^{travel} expenses back home of workers in war factories who have, in a great majority of the cases, been earning the highest wages of their lives. The House likewise refused to go along with Senator George's bill to put three million government employees under the unemployment compensation ~~pgor~~ program by which they would be paid from \$15 to \$30 a week for a period of 26 weeks after their jobs are concluded. The differences between the House and Senate Bill^s must now be ironed out by a conference committee. Conferees have already been appointed and will soon be at work trying to reach a compromise on the language and terms of the bills.

The same is true of the surplus property disposal bill. Both the House

and the Senate have passed bills for this purpose but with different terms.

The main point of difference is that the House provides one administrator and

gives him authority to do the job. The Senate bill sets up a board and gives

it ^{limited} ~~some~~ authority. As an administrative agency, boards have been on the wain

~~for the last several years~~ because we have learned from experience that a

divided authority often means irresponsibility and ~~sometimes means~~ confusion.

Experience seems to dictate that no matter how big or how little the job, the

best way to get it done is to appoint some capable man and give him both authority

and responsibility for doing it. Anyway, the differences on these two bills

will probably be ironed out within the next few days, and ~~Congress will then~~

~~repair home to repair political fences and engage in an election campaign. In~~

~~fact, with the passage of the only two important bills before Congress at this~~

~~time, a good many members are already on their way home.~~

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These bills, which have been passed on the premise that victory ~~was~~ not very far away, and the victorious march of our forces may well lead all of us to minimize the job yet ahead. The necessity that war production be kept at a high rate was emphasized by a message received in Washington during the week from General Dwight D. Eisenhower on the battlefield. General Eisenhower urged that we maintain the maximum rate of delivery across the Atlantic of all those things necessary for war, including particularly spare parts that a modern army and airforce require in battle, and ~~also~~ ~~many~~ heavy-duty trucks and tires and many other things. General Eisenhower said that 3,000 airplanes had been lost since the invasion of Europe began and that 150 tons of ammunition had

been used in one month. He used these as ^{ex}amples to illustrate the need for continuing a maximum rate of delivery of implements of war. General Eisenhower pointed out that all American units went to France with full equipment. Nevertheless, ~~he~~ ^{that} said during the first 70 days of operation, U. S. ground forces required more than 900 tanks to replace battle casualties. In that same period, General Eisenhower said that we replaced other losses in the following amounts: 2400 automatic rifles, nearly 2,000 jeeps, 1500 ^{mortars} ~~markers~~ (?) and 83,000 miles of field wire. Think of 83,000 miles of field telephone wire. That's more than enough to ~~go~~ ^{stretch} around the world three times. Some people will think this is a waste of wire. And perhaps that is true in some cases. But let us remember that the military operation in Europe has been one of movement - fluid conflict in which our forces have shown the greatest agility, the greatest capacity for rapid, effective and organized movement. It is clear that while our forces have been well organized and well planned, the Germans have become disorganized and, therefore, ~~are~~ their defeat and rout ~~of~~ all the more certain. No one will begrudge one mile or one foot of this precious communication wire, but it does serve to illustrate not only the tremendous cost of war in materiel but it also gives us an example of how great our continued effort must be to supply our troops with what they need and they must have to drive ahead to an early and complete victory. General Eisenhower said that these examples did not take into account expenditures of material in the British army, in which many items such as tanks are manufactured in the United States. Neither did his figures include French divisions which, of course,

are equipped almost exclusively with America-made weapons. The airforce, he said, has dropped more than 55,000 tons of bombs and used 44,000,000 gallons of aviation gasoline in support of the Northern France operations alone.

Pipe lines are being laid at the rate of 70 miles a day to carry fuel ~~am~~

to our rapidly advancing troops.

Those figures tell us why gasoline must be rationed.

Under-Secretary of War Patterson returned to Washington during the week with high praise for the organization of our armed forces. He said that the supply program had been so carefully planned and integrated with battlelines that army engineers were actually ready with the exact bridge needed to cross a given stream at a certain place and at a certain time. Though Secretary Patterson praised the movement of supplies and the organization of our forces, he, too, stressed the need for increased production, especially in heavy artillery and shells, aircraft bombs, trucks and heavy duty tires.

As our forces plunged on in victorious pursuit of a routed enemy and as Congress neared completion of important post-war legislation, the important conferences ^{between the} ~~with~~ United States, Great Britain, and Russia continued behind closed doors at Dunbarton Oaks, a palatial colonial home near Washington.

The chief conferees representing the United States, Great Britain and Russia issued a statement to the press during the week, saying that they had reached an agreement upon certain fundamentals but declined to go further into details.

Some newspapers in the country have been making much ado about the secrecy of the negotiations. Under-Secretary of State Stettinius took note of this

by saying that there were times when delicate ^{suggestions} must be handled, especially in their preliminary phases, in confidential conversations and conferences. He pointed to the privacy of the Constitutional Convention, ^{which} also referred to executive sessions of Congressional committees when matters of great import were being considered. The important thing about the conference is: ^{not that the discussions are not being held in the public gaze; it is rather} First, that the conference is being held; and second, that substantial agreement has been reached on the fundamentals of an international organization to keep the peace after this war is ended.

There is something to say against negotiations being conducted in secret. But there is also much to be said against submitting to the glare of publicity every technical detail that might at first be in disagreement. In this way, the differences on minor details might be ^{so} magnified ^{that} and the ~~whole~~ possibility of final ^{agreement} and effective action ^{might} be jeopardized. It may be well that the victories in Europe are taking the glittering glare of publicity ^{away} from these tremendously important conferences now under way. Let us hope and pray that as victory on the battlefield comes in Europe, that victory in the field of diplomacy and international cooperation will be equally marked so that man's dream of ages to outlaw war may be nearer fruition.

Another battle, a political battle on the homefront, is getting under way. It is no trouble any day now that Congress is in session to hear political speeches on either side and both sides of the political controversy. Speakers have already taken to the hustings and speeches by both presidential candidates

have been ^{already} announced. Let us hope that this diversion of national attention from the problems of war and peace to politics will not be too detrimental. There is one compensating thought. It will give to the American people an opportunity to pass judgment upon some very fundamental questions while the horrors and the terrible price of war are still upon us.