

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

In more than 10,000 posts of the American Legion, scattered from ocean to ocean and from Dominion to Gulf, regular meetings begin with a reading of the preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion. The first reverent words in that preamble are, "For God and Country, we associate ourselves together" What a testimony to man's faith as he seeks a solution for disturbing problems in anxious and critical hours. It has ever been thus. More than 300 years ago, the pilgrim fathers in drawing up the Mayflower Compact began: "In the name of God. In the fundamental Orders of Connecticut which are regarded as the predecessor of our Constitution, the pioneers began: "Forasmuch as it has pleased almighty God..." In the Declaration of Independence, the signers asserted, "With a firm reliance on the protection of Devine Providence..." In his second Inaugural address, Lincoln said, "Yet if God will that it continue ... still it must be said: 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" On March 3, 1863, Congress requested Lincoln to designate a day of prayer and humiliation. During the World War, President Wilson appointed a day for national prayer and supplication. Once more, we are beset with anxiety over the world situation and once more, human hearts reach out for the steadfastness and hope. On August 5th, Senator Gillette of Iowa introduced a resolution requesting the President to proclaim a day of prayer that we as a nation might petition "the Source of All Wisdom for the guidance and protection of our Nation in this crisis period." It is a testimony to our national faith.

PROS AND CONS ON CONSCRIPTION.

Great issues stir great debates. Every aspect of the issue is explored. Witness the debate on the proposal to pack the Supreme Court. It provoked great speeches, sound and dignified argument, and approached the Constitutional debates in the early history of the Republic. So the issue of peace time conscription will call forth some outstanding debate when it finally comes to the floor of Congress. Vast volumes of literature and mail are now flowing across the desk of every Congressman and Senator on this issue. Millions of words are flowing from the pens of columnists editors and publicists. Out of this vast welter of written material it becomes apparent that the argument will center around the contentions set out in the following paragraphs.

THE ARGUMENT FOR CONSCRIPTION.

It is contended that we should resort to peace-time conscription because

1. It is imperative that we assemble a large defensive force without delay and that time will not permit depending on the volunteer system.
2. The volunteer system is inadequate in producing a large and immediate standing military force.
3. It is the only "democratic and equitable" way of providing a large military force.
4. It is the only way of providing adequate training for large numbers of men before danger actually besets us.
5. It is the only method by which to obtain that type of selected army personnel that will be necessary under the new concepts of mechanized warfare.

THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST CONSCRIPTION.

It is contended that we should not resort to peace-time conscription because

1. It is undemocratic and a departure from the traditional American way.
2. It will become the incentive for using the element of compulsion in other fields of our social and economic life.
3. It is unnecessary because the volunteer system if given a fair and exhaustive trial will produce the necessary man-power.
4. It is unnecessary because there is no immediate danger of invasion of this hemisphere.
5. It is unnecessary now because the equipment and material necessary for training is not available for a large force.
6. It gives the illusion of strength and is therefore dangerous.
7. It destroys the moral factor so necessary to a nation's defense and that to resort to conscription in peace-time is a confession of moral bankruptcy.
8. It constitutes a confession to dictators that democracy is a confused, unstable, and weak system of government which in time of need cannot command spontaneous and voluntary defense.
9. It is an advanced step toward dictatorship.
10. The willing response of the people to additional taxes and debt in behalf of national defense indicates that when real danger arrives, the people will arise en masse to a defense of this country, and its interests.
11. A conscript army in peace-time is an open invitation to aggression and war.
12. The present strength of our Regular Army, National Guard and Reserves is ample for all present purposes in view of the new concepts of mechanized warfare which places the emphasis on machines and mobility rather than on mass man-power.

THE ENLISTMENT RECORD.

There has been much speculation and guesswork regarding enlistments in the Army. Indiscriminate figures are often used to prove that the volunteer system has failed or that it is a success depending on the viewpoint of the one who employs the figures. The best evidence would obviously come from the records of the Adjutant General of the War Department, whose duty it is to tabulate enlistment data from day to day. The record is as follows and can be found in the Congressional Record for August 8th over the signature of the Adjutant General. From January through June 1940, there were 74,579 enlistments. For the month of June, 1940 there were 23,444. For the month of July 1940, the record shows 31,989 and that there may be 2000 more for the month of July which were not yet tabulated. Re-enlistments for the first six months of 1940 were 20,538; for June and July, the re-enlistments were 3518 and 2947 respectively. Losses for these two months were 15,991, leaving a net gain for these two months of 39,441.