

NEBRASKA SPEECH.

AT Lincoln, Nebraska, June 14, 1917.

I come here to speak on the semi-centennial of Nebraska's statehood because what this celebration commemorates and connotes is of vital concern to all Americans at this moment. In ten past there have been two great crises in our national life; that in which the infant nation was saved by the soldierly valor and single-minded statesmanship of Washington, and that in which, in its raw maturity, the nation was again saved by the men who followed Lincoln and Grant. In each case the victory was followed by over half a century of national unity, secured by the peace of victory; and during this peace, brought by the victory of righteousness, men forgot that all its benefits would be lost if it were turned into the peace of cowardice and slackness. The Revolution was a war for liberty; and that liberty became of permanent value only when, again under Washington's lead, it was made secure by the orderly strength of the Union. The liberty secured in the Civil War to the blackman was thus secured only because the white man was willing to fight to the death for the Union, and for the flag, to which we owe undivided allegiance.

The old Thirteen States were born of the Revolution.

Nebraska, like Kansas, was born of the Civil War. It was the struggle over the admission to statehood of Kansas and Nebraska which marked the real opening of the contest that culminated at Appomatox.

The contest settled three great principles.

1. That we were no longer to make words substitute for facts, or accept fine phrases in lieu of great deed; and that therefore we were to make our devotion to liberty a fact instead of a phrase by abolishing slavery.

2. That we were all hereafter to be Americans with and undivided allegiance to the flag of the Union; and allegiance even more incompatible with a loyalty divided between the whole country and some section of the country.

3. That we were definitely to realize that while peace was normally a good thing, yet that righteousness stood above peace, and that the only good citizens were those who were sternly ready to face war rather than submit to an unrighteous or cowardly peace.

All these principles are at stake at the present moment. All three have been threatened, and therefore the honor and the welfare and the usefulness and indeed the very life of the Republic have been threatened, by the pacifist and pro-German agitation of the last three years.

1. For two years and a half we used fine phrases to cover ugly facts, when we unctuously protested our devotion to the liberties to small well-behaved nations in the abstract, and yet, in the concrete dared not say one word of indignant protest when with ruthless brutality, and without one shadow of moral justification, Germany conquered and enslaved Belgium. We did not even dare to act when our own innocent women and children and unarmed men lost their lives on the high seas, and when their murder was insolently justified by the tyrannous Prussianized autocracy which now menaces the entire peace-loving and liberty-loving world.

2. We permitted our national policy to be swayed by the national devotions and national antipathies of men who exercised the rights of American citizens but who showed themselves traitors to American, be the way in which they prostituted our citizenship to the interests of Germany, or to their hatred of England; men whose allegiance to this country was merely one of the lips, while in their hearts their loyalty was wholly given to Germany, or else to any and every enemy

of England, even altho that enemy was also an enemy of the United States and of mankind. Such disloyalty was quite as mischievous as, and far less excusable than, sectional disloyalty.

3. It would be impossible to overstate the damage done to the moral fibre of our country by the professional pacifist propaganda, the peace-at-any-price propaganda, which had been growing in strength for the previous decade and which for the first two and a half years of the war was potent in influencing us as a people to play a part which was wholly unworthy of the teachings of the great men of our past. The professional pacifist movement was heavily financed by certain big capitalists. This was not merely admitted but blazoned abroad by some among them; whereas the accusations that the munition makers or any other interested person, played any important part in the movement for preparedness were malicious falsehoods, well known to be such by those who uttered them. The professional pacifists during these two and a half years have occupied precisely the position of the copperheads during the time of Abraham Lincoln.

We now pay the same tribute of respect to the men who fought for their convictions in the Civil War, whether they were the blue or the gray - kinsmen of mine were in the Union army, and other kinsmen of mine in the Confederate army, and I am equally proud of both. But nobody is proud of the copperheads, who exalted peace above righteousness; and the professional pacifists of today are their spiritual heirs.

At last, thank Heaven, we came to our senses, realized our shortcomings, and tardily did our duty. At last we spurned the mean counsels of timidity and folly. At last we took up the challenge which Germany had, with equal brutality and contempt, so often hurled

in our faces. At last we determined to make our loyalty to this nation's past and to the welfare of humanity, a matter of deeds and not merely of empty words. We have entered the great war for the future of civilization; and now that we are at war it behooves us to bear ourselves like men.

We are utterly unprepared. We can now only partially offset our folly in failing to prepare during these last two and a half years, in failing to heed the lesson writ large across the skies in letters of flame and blood. Nine tenths of wisdom consists in being wise in time! Now we must fight without proper preparation. But we must prepare as well as we can at this late date; and the most important of all forms of preparedness is spiritual preparedness.

First of all we must sternly insist that all our people practice the patriotism of service, and that we all give a fervid and undivided loyalty to our common country. Patriotism is an affair of deeds, and patriotic words are good only in so far as they result in deeds. If phrasemaking and oratory, whether by public servants or by outsiders, are treated as substitutes for deeds, the result is unmitigated mischief. We read Lincoln's Gettysburg speech and Second Inaugural, only because his words were made good by his deeds, only because he threw aside all considerations other than the welfare of the nation, and with steadfast efficiency fought to the end for freedom and for the preservation of the Union.

As it was with that very great man in the past, so it must be with us lesser men in the present. Unless we now, at this moment, in this year, strive each of us to serve the country according to our several abilities, we are false to the memories of the nation-builders to whose sagacity and prowess we owe the creation of this State fifty years ago. Nebraska was founded as a State of the Union only because there were in the nation at that time enough men who were willing to do

and date and die at need for the Union. Today likewise, the instant and overwhelming need of the nation is for men who will serve in arms, and if necessary die, for the nation; and next to this is the need for the men and women who will put our entire industrial and agricultural strength back of the fighting men in the field. Only the men and women who do this are true patriots; for patriotism means service to the nation; and only those who render such service are fit to enjoy the privilege of citizenship.

We cannot render such service if our loyalty is in even the smallest degree divided between this and any other nation. There must be no division within our own ranks along the lines of creed or national origin; and any citizen of this country who uses his citizenship in the interest of some other country is a traitor to the United States. It is not merely our right, but our high duty, to insist on this fact. Twice over a century ago, we fought Great Britain. In each contest the great majority of the citizens of British descent took the lead and proved that they were Americans and nothing else. Those who did not so act were traitors. Now we are at war with Germany; and every citizen of German blood is bound in this contest to show the same whole-hearted Americanism in support of the United States against Germany that was shown in 1776 and 1812 by the Americans of British descent in the contests with Great Britain. To act otherwise is to be guilty of treason.

In the Revolutionary war the British armies who strove against our liberties were aided by powerful bodies of German auxiliaries. One of Washington's most famous victories, that at Trenton, was gained purely over Germans; and his first military experience was against the French. But it would be unworthy folly now to inveigh against Germany because a hundred and forty years ago she

furnished mercenary troops for our subjugation; or to inveigh against the French because they were the bitter foes of our people in colonial days. It is precisely as unworthy, precisely as silly and wicked, now to nourish hatred against England. Washington's troops included men of English and Irish, of German and French, blood. But they were Americans and nothing else! They did not ask whether they were to fight English, French, or Germans. They fought the foes of the American flag, whoever these foes might be.

This must be our spirit today. We are a different people from any people of Europe. It is our boast that we admit the immigrant to full fellowship and equality with the native born. In return we demand that he shall share our undivided allegiance to the one flag which floats over all of us. The events of the last few years have conclusively shown that the man, whether of German, or of any other origin, who attempts to combine allegiance to this country with allegiance to another, is necessarily false to this country.

I wish to make it clear beyond possibility of anything except willful misunderstanding, that I stand for the American who is in whole or in part of German blood precisely as I do for every other American, no matter what his blood. I could not do otherwise. I am such an American myself. I have German blood in me. I hold in peculiarly high honor the contribution made to our national life by the German strain in that national life. Many of my closest personal and political friends are of German blood. I suggested to the War department that if I were permitted to raise a division of troops it be put under the command of some General of the type of General Kuhn, both of whose parents were born in Germany; but who is an American and nothing else, just as I am. I could nominate an entire national Administration from a President down through his whole cabinet, each one of whom would be in whole or in part of German blood.

and behind whom in this crisis all Americans of my stamp could enthusiastically rally - because the men I have in mind are Americans and nothing else, and are incapable of treating any question except from the American standpoint. In the Pantheon of our Revolutionary heroes Stuhlenberg and Herkomer, of German origin, stand high. Among our heroes of the Civil War we do not think of Custer as a German, anymore than of Sheridan as an Englishman, or Grant as a Scotchman. They were all Americans and nothing else. The three best and most powerful contributions to the American literature dealing with our duty as Americans in this war, have been written by men of German blood on their fathers' side - Owen Wister, James Beck, and Gustavus Ohlinger.

The right attitude that our citizens should take towards one another could not be better put than it has been recently put by one of the leading Americans of Pittsburg, a man whose father and mother were born in Germany, Mr. Louis Muench, the President of the Republic Chemical Company. In this speech at the flag raising at the Company's plant, on May 3, he said;

"I trust every man fully realizes the significance of this solemn occasion. This flag stands for true democracy and equal rights and equal opportunities, for civil and religious liberty, for righteousness and humanity. It stands for the protection of the highest and the lowest of this great country, and if they are foreigners unnaturalized, they need have no fear, they will be treated with the same consideration and the same respect as if they were citizens as long as they respect this flag, and as long as they go about their work peacefully and orderly, and obey the laws of our country. In pursuing this policy, we are carrying out the fundamental principle for which this flag stands, - humanity, and the principles set forth by the President in his memorable address of April 2.

I recognize no particular class in addressing you;

This colony is like one great family on Neville Island.

I would not be holding sacred the memories of my father and mother if I did not recognize and appreciate the contributions of the foreign element of our country towards the wonderful development and and marvelous progress that this country has made. During the dark days from 1861 to 1864, the foreign element of our country were among the first to take up arms for the protection of our union, and the preservation of liberty. And why was it that this foreign element sought the shores of our country? It was because of their longing to breathe that pure and wholesome air of democracy, because they recognized the great opportunities that were here offered to them, and because this country does not recognize any nobility by birth, and the only nobility it does recognize is the nobility of the heart and mind, and because here honest labor receives its just reward. These are the blessings that we enjoy under the stars and stripes that wave above us, may they continue to wave through endless ages.

That is the sound doctrine. Such doctrine emphatically rebukes the native-born who treats this country as merely a place in which to wallow in materialism; it no less emphatically rebukes the immigrant who comes here merely to change one feeding trough for a better feeding trough. It recognizes what our spirit should be, what type of soul-quality we should develop. It demands that we show this quality in our home affairs; it applauds our having entered this war to serve humanity in the world of inter-nationalism. Such is the lesson which the last three years have taught us as regards Americanism. In this country we must have but one flag, the American flag; but one language, the English language; and above all, but one loyalty, and exclusive and undivided loyalty to the United States, with no Lot's wife attitude, no looking back to the various old world countries from which our ancestors have servedly come.

Now for the lesson of preparedness - military and economic, spiritual and material. Nearly two and a half years ago we sent an ultimatum to Germany, notifying her that we would hold her to strict accountability if she pursued the course she had announced. As a nation we lost every shred of excuse for failure to prepare as soon as the great war broke out; but if it was possible to add to our load of responsibility for remaining supine in the face of frightful danger we did add to it when we sent this notification of possible war and yet failed immediately to lend every energy towards making ready to back our words without deeds. Yet we did not take a single step. Then came the sinking of the Lusitania. And still we did not take a single step to prepare. For two years Germany carried to the limit her policy of ruthless murder against our innocent fellow citizens, and against all other neutrals, and her policy of hideous atrocity against all her foes - atrocity ranging from the dreadful torture of poison gas in battle to the reduction of the conquered populations into state slavery. And still we did not prepare. We followed the counsel of the pacifists.

These pacifists were doubtless in part actuated by mere folly. But many of them were actuated by baser motives even than folly. The pro-German organizers, from the beginning, used the pacifists' agitation as a cloud for their campaign against our national honor and interest. And the fact that sheer cowardice was more potent than love of peace was proved by the further fact that the leading pacifists dared not condemn a single specific act of wrong doing when such act was committed by the powerful and brutal foe they most feared - Germany. They clamored for neutrality between Germany and Belgium. They denounced war in language which reflected as heavily on the fathers who were defending their wives and daughters from outrage as upon the oppressors who systematically practiced rape and torture. They announced that we had no concern with the origins or purposes of the war. By their failure

to protest against the inhuman torture of the poison gas they made it necessary hereafter to accept this as an ordinary instrument of warfare; just as by our failure to take immediate action, in connection with the murder of innocent non-combatants by submarines, we committed an offense against humanity, the effects of which cannot be completely eradicated by any subsequent action on our part.

All this meanness and abandonment of duty was championed by the professional pacifists on the plea that thereby we should be "kept out of war". And by their political pressure, they prevented us from preparing, and kept us utterly unprepared, on the ground that preparedness invited war; their motto was "safety first," not "duty first." They cared nothing for righteousness. They cared nothing for humanity. They cared nothing for our national honor or interest. All they asked was a "peace" that would permit us to get all four feet in the trough while we strove to distract attention from the squalid baseness of our materialism by the shrill clamor of a sham-sentimentality.

And nevertheless we have not been kept out of war. Our avoidance of duty simply invited such cumulative repetition of insult and injury that finally war was forced on us, so that at the last it was only by men whose public policy was on a level with the private policy of a man who would not even resent his wife's face being slapped by a ruffian or his daughter being kidnapped by a whiteslaver. Our persistency in remaining utterly unprepared did not result in keeping us out of war. It merely resulted in our drifting into war stem foremost, in a condition of such complete unreadiness that we owe and ignoble safety exclusively to the protection of the exhausted nations to whose help we have announced that we intend to come. We have been blind to the dreadful spectacle produced by Germany's

unilateralism. We have hoped that we could remain in safety

hind those who were fighting the fire, and at the same time preserve a mean neutrality between the incendiaries and the fire fighters. And now, when the fire is licking our walls, instead of being able to help put it out, we are still scrambling into our clothes.

I don't like war, any more than I like a house afire. But I count it just as silly and just as wicked to refrain from preparing against war, and from crushing those who make wicked war, as it is to refuse to prepare against a fire, or to smash a firebug.

Over four months have passed since Germany declared war upon us (for her note of January 3 was simply a declaration of war); and she had already been practically making war on us for two years. But we still have not a single regiment at the front. It has recently been announced from Washington that the shortage of supplies is so complete that the small division of gallant regulars under gallant General Pershing, which it is hoped soon to send to the front, cannot be reinforced by other divisions for many months to come, and that the training of the draft army cannot even be begun until some time in September, at least three months hence. This means that until at least a year after Germany forced war on us (for remember that Congress announced that Germany was at war with us), we shall not be able to organize a fighting army. This fact is worth the especial attention of all the well-meaning but thoughtless enthusiasts who cheerfully believe that in the event of war a million men would spring to arms between sunrise and sunset. Not only have the million men not "sprung to arms" within a day, but they are merely crawling to arms with the hope of reaching them within a year. The fault lies primarily in our complete failure to prepare during the last three years since the great war opened. Nine tenths of wisdom is being waste in time

We have not been wise in time; and now we rely on our Allies to protect us from the effect of our folly. Just think of what Germany would have done to us within the first month - not to speak of the first four months- after we broke off diplomatic relations with her if we had not been able to shield our feeble and shortsighted unreadiness behind the navy of Great Britain and the armies of the Allies. We owe our ignoble safety to the British fleet, and the French and English armies. We escape paying an utterly ruinous payment for our folly only because the soldiers and sailors of our Allies pay for it with their lives. Uncle Sam is in the undignified position of the man who gets on a street car and then fumbles in his pocket while somebody else pays his fare.

If we had been willing to prepare, and if we had showed that we meant what we said, we would probably have prevented the war, and would certainly have brought it to a close as soon as we entered it. Now, friends, there is no use crying over spilt milk. But it is even worse to make believe that the milk was not spilt. The important thing is to face the fact of the spilling and resolve that it shall not be spilt again. Let us set in the spirit of the words of Abraham Lincoln at the close of the Civil War: "Human nature will not change. In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents of this as philosophy to learn wisdom from, and none of them as wrongs to be revenged". Let us manfully acknowledge how great have been our shortcomings for the last few years, and then let us, with a particle of revengeful or recriminatory or uncharitable feeling, learn from them wisdom to be applied in our future conduct. From this time on let us insist on an absolute and undivided Americanism in this land, untampered by any half allegiance to the countries from which our ancestors may severally have sprung, and untainted by any unworthy national animosity

towards any other country. Let us prepare ourselves spiritually, economically, and in all military and naval matters - including as a permanent policy the policy of universal military training and service, so that never again shall we be utterly unready, as we now are, to meet a great crisis. Finally, in the present war, a war for liberty and democracy against the ruthless militaristic tyranny of the Prussianized Germans of the phensollerns, let us as speedily as possible train our giant, but our soft and unready, strength, so that we may use our hardened might to bring the slaughter to a real and final and in the only honorably possible, by securing for ourselves and our Allies the peace of justice based on overwhelming victory.

When the war is done we must turn in a ver earnest to the tasks of peace. A prime task of peace to which our people must resolutely turn their attention as soon as the strain of the war will permit, is to put the farmers, the men who actually live on the soil which they actually own and actually till, on the proper footing. This can only be done by cooperation on their part, by combination in production and in marketing along the lines which, for instance, have been so successfully followed by the farmers in Denmark. What the man can best do by himself should be done by himself; what can best be done by voluntary cooperative associations should be done by such associations; and what cannot be thus done, and yet ought to be done, must be undertaken by the government, State and National. Warehouse and terminal facilities should be controlled in the interest of the farmer himself, so that he may be put on an equality with the great business men, the masters of transportation and distribution, with whom he deals; and all the unnecessary middlemen between the man who grows the food and the man who consumes it should so far as possible be eliminated. Nebraska is one of the great farming states, and it should take the lead in securing the right solution of this vital question.

This . . . This farm problem is vital to the future of our nation. But our immediate and pressing problem is that of the war. The most important thing is to send abroad at the earliest possible moment a great fighting army. Second only to the army in the work of winning this war comes our Red Cross. Indeed the importance of this work is so great that the President of the United States has set apart next week - from June 18-25- as a period for sacrifice and unselfish generosity, a week in which the whole American people will be asked to join in raising funds to enable our Red Cross to perform its vast and indispensable duties in this war.

That these duties may not only have the support of our hearts but that the gifts of our people may be made effective, may be put to the best possible use, the President has also commissioned several of the ablest business men of the country as a War Council of the Red Cross, to administer this service on behalf of a stricken world. This War Council has already made far reaching plans. They tell us that a fund of \$100,000,000. must be raised at once in order to meet even the most urgent need, fund we are asked to raise for this work of sacrifice and of consecration.

Here, indeed, is a summons to every American. It is an enormous sum of money; but what comfort can we take in withholding that, or any other sum of money, if it is needed to relieve the suffering of our own sons or the sons of our Allies who are fighting for all that makes life worth living?

Into our Red Cross should be poured without stint a heartfelt offering of Thanksgiving that we are permitted to join in this great service to all mankind. Our people have yet to learn the true meaning of sacrifice. We have been so far away from the scene of battle, we have

been lulled into such drowsy indifference to duty by our ease and prosperity, that we could not feel with any intensity the meaning to us of this awful conflict. But now, we must give of our blood and our resources. We see now that this has in fact from the beginning been a war for our liberty no less than for the liberty of our Allies. They have already suffered and endured; they are still suffering far more than we thought it possible for men to endure. Now our opportunity has come. Our soldiers and sailors will do their part without flinching; we may rest assured of their courage and fidelity. The Red Cross offers to us, who are not allowed to fight, the opportunity for sacrifice and for help.

We little realize what is before us. Our own sons and brothers will soon be going into battle. They will be three thousand miles from home, in a land already wasted by war, a land threatened by famine, a land smitten by disease. They tell us that in many cases today the wounds of soldiers in France must be tied up with newspaper for the want of the necessary surgical bandages. When our own men are wounded, - as they surely will be in great numbers, - are we going to allow them to suffer yet more because we fail to provide these things which can at least mitigate distress? Surely not! But we must do it in advance. If we wait it may be too late. Do it now! Nine tenths of wisdom is being wise in time!

Our Red Cross must not only care for the shattered bodies of our wounded men; it alone can become a foster parent to them in the trying conditions they are sure to face when they are convalescent from wounds or recovering from exhaustion. We shall soon have an army of a million soldiers. When they go to France they must have homes in which to rest and to be cared for and to recover. The generosity of our whole people must make it possible for our Red Cross to provide for them. In past wars the Red Cross devoted itself largely to caring for the wounded behind the battle lines.

Even in this war that duty is still of vast magnitude and paramount importance. All that we do or can do for the soldiers of our own or Allied armies will be all too little. But this is a war in which not only armies but whole peoples are engaged. In no previous war have the innocent non-combatants had to bear so terrible a share of the physical suffering. And it is through our Red Cross that we can show to the nations of the world how the great heart of the American people goes out to them in their distress.

France - proud, brave, bleeding from ghastly wounds needs us sorely. Tuberculosis is raging throughout her land. Fifteen hundred of her towns and villages have been razed to the ground by the calculated barbarity of the invader. Millions of her people are homeless and starving, bereft even of the barest covering for their bodies, of stoves, of utensils with which to cook or eat, or agricultural implements of animals - indeed of the simplest elements of civilization. And to us alone can these people come for help; We alone have the abundance with which to supply their direst needs.

To Russia, too, we must reach out our helping hand. We little know what she has suffered and is suffering. Her soldiers went into battle ill equipped with arms or ammunition. Of medical supplies she had almost none. To care for her wounded on a battle line of 1,000 miles she has but 6,000 ambulances, while France had 64,000 in a battle line of 400 miles, and even that is not enough. Russia, long obedient to autocracy has not flinched in this conflict. Her people have had to struggle not only to free the world from autocracy, but to make their own land a land of liberty. Russia needs all we can do to strengthen her courage and to make her feel that we are indeed behind her. Our armies can do little for her. Our Red Cross alone can take into Russia the message of hope, of help, of confidence which she so terribly needs. The message must be practical. It must

It must carry deeds and not merely words; and it should be carried at once. Probably never before were so many people in distress and agony as in Russia at this very hour. We can take no more vital step toward winning this war than to put renewed heart and strength into Russia.

So let this summons to our people for a week of sacrifice and generosity be not in vain. Let Red Cross week be a week wherein the whole American people shall pledge to the service of a great cause, both themselves and their possessions. Equip the Red Cross for the beginning, and for the carrying through, of as sacred a mission as was ever undertaken in behalf of a suffering world.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.