

RED CROSS QUICK TO AID NEEDY FAMILIES OF SOLDIERS

Home Service Branch Is Looking After Those Who Have Been Left in Want by the Call to the Colors of Their Chief Bread Winners

THE problem of the \$18 a week clerk who has been a chief contributor to the support of a family and who has been called into the nation's war service at a salary of \$50 a month has been more or less the subject of Government consideration, but the problem has not been settled by the Government.

It is true that the Government appropriated \$141,000,000 to be expended in family allowances, but it is also true that this sum is not enough. A satisfactory solution is being worked out, however, through private agencies and through the home service branch of the Red Cross, and in another serious way the solution of another serious war problem for the folks at home is being worked out.

Gov. Whitman has received many appeals from wives and mothers of men in the United States service who had not received the money their husbands and sons allotted to them from their soldier's pay. In each case the Governor was compelled to write back that the State has nothing to do with the question of Federal pay, and that he had no power of relief.

The Red Cross has stepped into the breach, and is giving relief wherever the case warrants, and until the Federal allotment checks begin to come in regularly it will bear another large burden. The extent of this work in New York county and The Bronx, where a very active home service branch is conducted under the chairmanship of Mrs. John M. Glenn, is shown by reports of the past three months.

There are now 2,888 families receiving aid in this district, either because Government money has failed to come in or because the grant is not sufficient to safeguard health and maintenance. At least \$25,000 has been expended.

Help for Those at Home.

Two hundred women have been marshalled under Mrs. Glenn to visit families where aid is sought and to extend relief. They work early and late. There are few busier offices than at the branch headquarters at 130 East Nineteenth street.

In addition to the home investigation the branch has retained a male assistant to report on conditions in the draft camps near New York, with the object of finding out from the men in The Bronx and New York county what they have allotted in the way of support for the people at home and to help ease the domestic strain.

It would seem that the parting in itself was enough of a hazard to require no sequel, but with coal shortage and workless weeks and no very wide margin ever existing between the cost of living and the probability of unemployment, there is imperative need of the most efficient Home Service Workers. They may come at a time when Government checks will roll in automatically and with such regularity that families will not be in distress, but that would not



Home service branch of Red Cross is looking after the needs of soldiers' families.

put an end to the Red Cross work at home. There are strange fears and forebodings in some families of naturalized soldiers. Mothers do not speak English and they do not understand the draft law. It is a body with venom on its tongue.

They do not understand why their boy or their husband has been taken away, and they may not be in sympathy at all with the Government's motive. They may not be able to write letters to their men at camp. Their landlord may eject them because the Government money did not come. A thousand problems may oppress them.

The programme that Mrs. Glenn has adopted is intended to smooth most of the troubles away. A legal aid committee, of which W. L. Carns is chairman, is available for the law, with special reference to the war insurance act. Moving pictures and lectures are to be given to educate in the war aims of the Government. Writing hands in the branch office will write letters for the mothers at dictation and the volunteer visiting corps is discovering the exact needs of the families and is directing the disbursement of funds from a treasury to which no strings are attached.

Demands Are Increasing.

It would be an interesting social problem, but it is engrossing as patriotic service. Assisting Mrs. Glenn is Miss Edna J. Wakefield, secretary for the New York county Red Cross branch. Already she has noted the drain of war upon the city's human reserves.

The young men have gone, the married men are now going in increasing numbers, she says. With their going the relief work becomes increasingly important. And as the local branch is working, so is the State, under the Red Cross. Every city will learn, if it has not already, the importance of conserving the home resources, represented by the families of men who have gone either to camp or behind the veil of the lines in France.

Louis Kavinsky will not go to war with a high heart if he knows that by his going his good old mother may want food or fuel, or his little sister will be unattended, or his wife will be turned out by an inconsiderate landlord. He will write letters home that will darken the blackness of sorrow and there will be such despair in him that he will drill faintly and bear bitter thoughts for the Government and its war. Among foreigners these things are not to be lightly passed over and no native American will find them tolerable.

The home service workers are not spending time to take the War Department to task for not making prompt remittances in pay allotments. They realize that there are too many things to be done at Washington to attempt to correct any one of them on their own motion. The war insurance law requires soldiers to assign amounts ranging from \$15 a month up to dependents, and direct the War Department to pay amounts ranging as high as \$50 a month, according to the size and condition of the family. There are further provisions for insurance in case of sickness and death.

The work of the Home Service branch first began to assume proportions in November, with the coming of cold and coal shortage, and the strain of a month's absence of many drafted men at camp. In a large number of cases no checks were received for September and November allotments until late in December. Early in January considerable improvement was noted.

Women Bear Their Burden.

And in the lack of heat and food by many families of the lower East and West Side and in The Bronx, families who had given their men cheerfully, there was extreme suffering. There may have been death. Italians, Russians, Jews, Poles, Hungarians, Americans—they had spared their men with mental fortitude, but they had no bulwark against physical necessity.

Had it not been for the prompt action of settlement workers and the Home Service the nation would have lost many of its good fighters at home. It was particularly affecting that few of the women who came to aid—even the foreigners—complained against the war or berated the patriotic exigency that had taken their men support from them.

"My Tony, he's a-gone," said an Italian woman, "but I do not mak' de kick, he's a-gone to fight."

But she needed coal and her children needed food. The Home Defence branch bought oil stoves when the coal ran out—bought them when a famous oil man was moving from his uptown house to a hotel to keep warm, because its orders, recognized as necessary, were given preference.

In the month of November the organization spent \$9,100, with 1,809 cases. There was a gain of 725 cases in December and the expenditures jumped to over \$13,000. At the end of December there were 2,033 families under care and nearly 800 families were added in January. The workers were expecting a slackening of cases with the coming of the new year, believing that Government money would give relief, but the scope of the work is widening and promises to grow much larger.

All nations and creeds—Americans, Austrians, Roman Catholics, atheists—share in the home service bounty. All lines of prejudice are down; so emphatically down that it does not even occur to the workers to suggest the fact. The November report showed the following distribution of nationalities:

American, 519; Italian, 58; Russian Jew, 43; Irish, 25; Austrian, 23; Rumanian, 7; English, 6; Hungarian, 7; German, 4; Spanish, 3.

The growing preponderance of husbands in the service was shown by these figures:

Husbands, 260; sons, 277; brothers, 33; nephews, 7; fathers, 2; grandsons, 1; uncle, 1. There were three families in which three sons have gone to war, twenty-six families in which two sons have gone and one family gave four sons.

All Are Assisted.

Similarly, there is no limit to the arms of service served by this organization. There were 486 cases of families with men in the National Army, 162 in the Regulars, 34 in the Navy, 34 in the

National Guard units; and there were families of 14 Canadians under care, 10 families of aviators, 7 of the hospital corps.

From draft boards, social agencies, commanding officers, newspapers, casualty lists, personal application and interested persons cases come crowding in daily to the home service offices. A volunteer office force has all it can do to answer the telephones and talk with the persons who come for aid.

The legal aid committee, headed by Mr. Carns, is composed of the following lawyers: Frank N. Crosby, Otto Stanfield, Max E. Bernheim, Sydney B. Cardozo, F. Campbell, Jeffrey, Gilbert D. Lamb and A. J. Enselman. They are daily on call at the branch office. Henry C. Mellon conducts an information bureau at the Hall of Records for the same purpose.

Commanding officers at the draft camps where boys in the district are stationed are making full use of the organization. When Bill of The Bronx, of George of the East Side got an idea that their "people" are up against it so hard they should return home, they tell the proper officer about it, and the proper officer tells the commanding officer. A report of some sort is necessary, because the C. O. isn't privileged to restore any one to the honor of his family, except for absolute necessity. The home service branch makes the investigation dutifully and its recommendations have weight.

Mrs. Glenn and her aids do not overlook any source of information that may aid their work. The newspapers are scanned for possible cases and casualty lists, ship disasters and

illness at camp are traced to the folks at home and relief given if needed.

Seven families whose men went down with the Antilles learned of the work of the service branch. The British Consul had on one occasion referred a case to the branch for action. The Canadian Club cooperates regularly. Draft boards are constantly flooded with appeals of varying sorts.

IT PAYS TO BE GENEROUS

CAST thy bread upon the waters," said the Bible, and the truth of the ancient word was sustained only recently in an astonishing and unusual way.

Many times came the return to the dealer, and wide was the profit that accrued to all connected with the charitable act.

Among the many strange livelihoods practiced in New York is there any stranger than that of the junk hunter? He searches the refuse of the great city for bits of value and seldom is the day he doesn't make better than a living wage.

Junk hunters are subdivided into classes, such as those who reclaim metal, paper, lost articles, rags, &c. The specialist who concerns us is the man who recovers old postage stamps. He is the art highest in the junk hunting trade.

Came into a paper warehouse on the philatelic junk hunter's route one day five long, green boxes that held the 1850-1855 correspondence of a defunct shipping firm. It was his luck to get access to only one box—that of 1855.

From it he gleaned a mass of old envelopes with stamps intact. "He had found 'original covers,'" as they are called in the stamp world, and some were of real value. In a jiffy the junk hunter rushed to Park Row to his principal with the find, receiving \$15 for three envelopes from Hawaii. He was sent posthaste back to the

Solution Found for a Problem Neither Nation nor State Could Meet at Once When It Arose Suddenly... Women and Children Saved From Suffering

and turn many of them over to Mrs. Glenn.

The Government allotments are required to be made on the following scale, with \$50 a month as the top limit:

For wife, but no child, \$15; wife and one child, \$25; wife and two children, \$32.50; for each additional child, \$3.

For no wife, but one child, \$5; no wife, but two children, \$12.50; three children, \$20, &c.

In case the soldier is not married the following scale applies: One parent, \$10; two parents, \$20; brother, sister, &c. Allotments by the Government are conditional upon allotments being made voluntarily by the soldiers.

That there is appreciation from the men at camp of the watchful supervision exercised by the organization is indicated by the following letter:

"I will never be able to thank you and the Red Cross enough for what you have done for my aunts in their time of need. I hope some day to try and repay to some one else in need, not for myself, but for my aunts, to help the Red Cross do its wonderful work for the needy soldier and his family. I thank you for anything you do in the future."

There are hearts being lightened in many a tent at Upton and other camps by the knowledge that absence has not meant want for the ones left at home. Uncle Sam demands that his soldier fight with strong muscles and a brain in which one thought is fixed—to get the enemy with the first punch. Tommy Atkins did some tall walking about Blighty, if our memory is good, and Sammy ought, no doubt, to sigh just as heavily for his own snug nest, but if he gets cheers from home and the news that the Red Cross will take his turn at drill and down his chow with Jews aching to take a bite out of the first Boche he meets on the other side.

MORE WHEAT IS THE PRESSING NEED IN ITALY

By PHILEAS R. MACKENZIE.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.
Rome, Jan. 27.—Food shortage was felt in Italy much later than in other European countries. Even now it is felt in some districts more than in others.

Central and southern Italy fare better than the northern provinces. While future prospects are great, the present are uncertain, conditions in Italy are not particularly bad and the menace of starvation is considerably far off.

What Italy lacks is wheat. The grain crops last year fell far below the average and the deficiency, increased to about 40,000,000 quintals owing to the loss of the army wheat stores during the retreat from the Isonzo, cannot be imported owing to the difficulties of transportation. The Food Controller, Signor Crespi, said last month in the Chamber of Deputies that the wheat available in Italy was only sufficient for January, hinting quite openly that the future was in the hands of the Allies.

Since then the situation has considerably improved. Speaking in the Senate two days ago, Signor Crespi announced that the provisioning of Italy until the next harvest had been assured, thanks to special agreements with the Allies, especially America, which promised to supply the necessary wheat.

Diminution of Rationing.

The food problem has not yet been solved, however, as shortages are apt to increase in the future. In no other country in the world is bread so much the staff of life as in Italy, but precisely because the Italians are and have always been so dependent upon wheat, the rationing is attended with almost insurmountable difficulties in this country. As the common laborer and peasant in Italy eats hardly anything else, bread it is next to impossible to make him eat less bread or hope that by so doing he will eat something else. Next to bread comes macaroni, which is eaten largely by all classes.

An attempt to reduce the consumption of bread naturally resulted in an increase of consumption of macaroni, and the problem instead of being simplified was complicated, for the obvious reason that like bread macaroni is made out of wheat.

While the question was being examined and some precious time was wasted until a decision was reached, the people in several provinces, including Rome and Naples, bought up all the macaroni they could find and hoarded it against the day when the bread ration system was to be enforced. A shortage of macaroni

Difficulties of Rationing Increased by the Fact That Bread Is the Principal Food of the Peasants and Hoarding of Grain Is Common

followed, and then the Food Controller decided to ration macaroni instead of bread.

It is a well-known fact, and it is useless hiding it, that the Italians resent any attempt to restrain their food consumption. While Italy was preparing for war extensive requisitioning of wheat was resorted to and the prices fixed were so low that the farmers who evaded requisition were enabled to sell their wheat later at a great profit. Prices then rose

higher and kept rising as the demand increased and the supply diminished. Hoarding proved most profitable, and there is not one single family of peasants in Italy that has not some grain hidden carefully away—so carefully, in fact, that they continue to buy bread, lest it should be suspected that they do not need it.

Laws against hoarding of cereals and other commodities have been passed,

but besides being evaded, and evading law is one of the Italian fine arts, they cannot be enforced with safety, as tens of thousands of peasants would have to be fined and arrested.

Allied help always will be needed in Italy, for many reasons that are very difficult to explain and much more to understand. In the first place food shortage never can be felt here to the same extent as in other countries, for

the simple reason that as living was very cheap before the war the gradual increase in prices, although comparatively great, on the whole proved lower than in other countries.

Two Meatless Days a Week.

For more than a year Thursdays and Fridays have been meatless days in Italy, but while this prohibition resulted undoubtedly in a great economy of meat

consumption it at the same time contributed to increase the cost of vegetables and other commodities. As fish and vegetables were always very cheap in Italy even an increase of 100 per cent. fails to make their prices prohibitive. The same may be said of other commodities which are now dear, not on account of their scarcity but simply because their supply, the same now as before the war, is in part withheld by the owners lest prices should go down.

A case in point is that of fruit. Fruit production in Italy is so considerable that before the war tons of it were exported and still enough was left for home consumption at very low prices. Now fruit is very dear and it should be instead dirt cheap, as none is exported. An fruit grower are compensated for the profits they derived from exportation by the high prices now prevailing at home they take good care not to flood the market, but regulate the supply according to the demand, and they utilize the surplus to feed pigs, cattle or poultry.

Living Is Still Cheap.

On the whole, however, living in Italy is still cheap and a good meal can be had in any Italian restaurant for half the price it costs in France or in England. There are restrictions of course such as sweets, cream, butter, &c., but a tip works miracles in Italy, where everything is done to oblige the customer. Conditions vary from one province to another and food shortage is more acute in the north than in the south. The peasants are naturally well off everywhere, and the working people, whose wages have been increased during the war, do not fare badly; instead they have improved their standard of living. As for the well to do; they still live well by spending more.

The middle classes, such as the families of clerics and other employees, probably feel the food shortage more than all, but their earnings never were in proportion to their numerous families even before the war, and their traditional frugal habits now stand them in good stead. They eat sparingly but sufficiently, finding the problem of life more difficult than usual.

So long as the Italians have bread they will stand the strain of war and resist. They may lack discipline and resent State interference in food control, which they will strive and often succeed to evade. They will grumble more than other people and blame instead of cooperating with the authorities. But they are more frugal than all the other people at war and they can live on much less provided they have bread. Bread is essential to Italy, and her allies, America, especially, can help this country in no better way than by sending her grain.

PARIS APPLAUDS PORCHE DRAMA

"Les Butors et la Finette" Called Equal of Rostand's "Chanteclair"

By MILTON V. SNYDER.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.
PARIS, Jan. 26.—Not since Rostand's "Chanteclair" has Paris had an allegorical play of the charm and mastery of Francois Porche's "Les Butors et la Finette," produced at the Theatre Antoine.

Both "Chanteclair" and Porche's new drama excited national sentiment, glorify duty and effort. Rostand foresaw what Porche has seen accomplished. They are inspired by the same thoughts, preach the same crusade, come to the same conclusion.

The scene where, under the threat and the oppression of the dark flight of the bird of prey, all Chanteclair's people gather around their chief, seems to be the image of the rigors of the discipline and the necessities of this war. The pre-war invasion of France by the Germans and their agents and France's careless, flippant ignoring of their presence and purpose is the subject of the allegory. Here is the story of "Les Butors et la Finette" (the clothoppers and Finette):

Once upon a time a Princess (Finette) lived happily in the most beautiful province and in the most beautiful castle in the world. Her subjects loved her because they loved her freely. She did not oppress them; left them free to act and think as they wished, to work according to their desire and to amuse themselves. Careless, frivolous and naturally inspired by the same thoughts, she mock the steward of their young sovereign, a certain "But," who came from no one knew where, a suspicious foreigner, an oppressor of being, pretensions, obsequious, constantly irritated by their guile, shocked by their freedom of manner. But thinks them corrupt, degenerate, ignorant and blind to changing conditions, incapable of discipline.

Old Miron, the head gardener, is the only one who realizes the aim of this criticism. But the young people do not heed him and continue to amuse themselves. Butors are making ready for war. But is their man—But the spy, the traitor, the corruptor, the thief of documents and secrets. His preliminary task is done. He furtively quits the festive castle and meets the advance guard of the Butors. The War Lord questions But, congratulates him and pays him.

The scene changes to the country. The Butor army is approaching. It has violated the frontier, massacred the sentinels and occupied the nearest towns. Then the sinister scene disappears and the mad, voluptuous violonists reappear. The Princess, flattered, overexcited, radiant, knows the full joy of living.

Suddenly, a thunder clap interrupts the bacchanal of the thunder of men more dreadful than the fire of heaven. The rumbling of the guns increases, followed by cries of fear. It is the people's supreme hour of trial. But instantly they reply to the call of the cousin; all of them rush to the help of the Princess. They go—rush on their gun barrels, songs on their lips, with the resolve not to be the certainty of victory. The act ends in an outbreak of valor. The mobilized soldiers depart. Those who await their return—mothers, wives, sweethearts—suppress their fears that they would be ashamed to shed on such a day.

Here the author has written a page of history in the grouping, in one synthetic tableau, where nothing essential is omitted, or all preceding impression and lesson.

The second part of the drama does not quite equal the first. It does not present so firmly constituted an ensemble; it contains too many things. But it is full of inspiration.



Left to Right—Prof. Patterson of Liverpool; Bishop Luther B. Wilson, Dr. Burkett, Capt. Garda of the Italian Army; Francis B. Sayre, President Wilson's son-in-law; an Italian officer, and Dr. John Kellman.