

Draft of Marked Aid to American Manhood

Inspires Physically Rejected to Cure Themselves if Possible and Classification Makes Many Available for Some Duty



SURGEON GENERAL GORGAS,
U. S. A.
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THE new selective draft regulations give to every man of suitable age the opportunity to serve his country and they also should prove of inestimable value to the American people.

The Provost Marshal-General and the Surgeon-General of the army have considered this measure in a liberal and broad minded manner in the light of the present needs and of the future. The details of the instruction of the medical advisory boards were worked out by a committee of which Col. Bushnell was the chairman, while Major J. C. Bloodgood of Baltimore and Dr. B. M. Pusey of Chicago, both eminent physicians, devoted themselves to the technical requirements in conjunction with a staff of experts from the office of Surgeon-General Gorgas.

Several months of contact with this work in an advisory way in the Council of National Defence has impressed me with the immense importance of the new regulations, not only in winning the war, but in yielding valuable social by-products.

The revised rules permit the accepting for active service of perhaps 50 per cent. of those who under the old specifications would be declined. This would mean a saving of several hundred thousand men for military service, to say nothing of the reflex effect.

Under former rulings, for example, 30 per cent. of the rejections were due to eye and tooth defects, about 20 per cent. to under weight and to foot troubles and about 10 per cent. to hernia.

Draft Revealed Weakness.

Nations in conflict learn their strength and their weakness. This is especially true of the lessons of the first draft. The report of Provost Marshal-General Crowder shows that of the 3,082,946 men called between the ages from 21 to 31 years 2,510,706 have been examined by local boards, of whom 730,756 were rejected for physical reasons, or 29.11 per cent. of those examined. Adding to this 5.8 per cent. for those released for such causes at the cantonments, we have 34.91 per cent. eliminated because they were not considered bodily fit.

The reasons for rejection in the order of their frequency were: Defective eyes, poor teeth, under weight, hernia, heart weakness, defective feet, injured or amputated limbs, ear defects, tuberculosis, under size, bladder diseases, varicose veins, over weight, blood disease, varicocele, deformity of trunk, asthma, bronchitis, mental diseases and insanity, debility and poor physique, miscellaneous injuries, hemorrhoids, kidney ailments, rheumatism and miscellaneous defects.

The report of the Surgeon-General from September 21 last up to December 7 reveals that of the 1,058,303 men at the cantonments during that period 22,000 were injured while undergoing drill or doing their regular camp duties and that there were 251,000 cases of illness, making in all 273,000 men under treatment in this period.

These figures give us a fair idea of the physical stamina of our man power. Of

the 67 per cent. who were accepted under the previous regulations there were many who had defects and impairments which were readily preventable or remediable, and many of those defects will be remedied under the present regime.

There is no doubt in my mind that at least 60 per cent. of the conditions which resulted in rejections could have been avoided by proper personal hygiene, by medical and dental treatment, or, going back further still, by adequate physical training and nourishment had they been undertaken in boyhood years. A large part of the disabilities result from that lack of physical strength which comes from malnutrition and malassimilation. When we reach the 31 to 45 age group we shall notice many more cases of physical inefficiency and the rejections will be much higher.

The first draft taught us, even when its regulations were so strictly applied, that a very large percentage of men were being rejected on account of troubles which could be remedied either by closer attention to their bodily well being, by minor surgical operations and by medical treatment. Various projects were suggested for meeting this need. The suggestions came from so many sources that it is impossible to assign to any one man the origin of the present policy of the Government.

Reclamation camp projects were suggested at about the same time by several authorities, and among numerous advocates of this idea was Dr. John H. Quayle, a physician of Cleveland, Ohio, through whose energetic persuasion a bill was introduced by Senator Pomerene in Congress providing that \$100,000,000 be appropriated for reclamation camps to which there could be sent many of the men rejected by the local draft boards. A measure so radical as this which contemplated forcing men to undergo serious operations for functional disorders would have required prolonged legislative consideration.

Absolute Rejections Limited.

It failed to pass because it was regarded as too revolutionary and also because the War Department had in mind plans which, in its opinion, better met the situation. The revised regulations provide that absolute rejections shall be limited to such cases as severe skin trouble, insanity, epilepsy, deformity, tuberculosis, heart trouble and severe debility or anemia.

The balance of the men of draft age, that is those not absolutely and finally rejected, are divided into classes. Those who are ready on account of their physical condition for active military service will soon be in khaki.

As many of the remainder as possible will be made fit, not in reclamation camps, but through agencies which already exist, such as the hospitals connected with the cantonments and also the reconstruction hospitals which are now being prepared for the reception of wounded men. The same facilities which are prepared to make a man ready for service and those which are being prepared to remake the sufferers from the battlefields will be employed to develop the efficiency of the soldiers-to-be.

Those in the deferred groups will receive instruction as to their needs and be

stimulated to improve their condition. In fact a pamphlet prepared by the Council of National Defence is now under consideration for distribution.

Every man of draft age may be considered as belonging to one of four classes designated as A, B, C and D.

Class A consists of men from 21 to 31 years of age who are considered fit for military duty. It includes some who have slight physical defects readily amenable to treatment. A few may have a tendency to flat foot or a nasal obstruction which can be easily removed, or certain other minor defects which need not impair efficiency. Such will be treated in the reconstruction or cantonment hospital, and the recruits when convalescent may be assigned to light camp duties.

Second Class May Be Cured.

The second class, B, includes men whose physical condition requires much more attention than does that of the first division. They will not be immediately called to the colors, but will be required to subject themselves to such treatment as may be indicated. They could report to their own family physicians or be aided by the private or public hospitals of the civil class, they could receive advice and medical attendance, if need be, through civilian relief organizations, or, when they live close enough to the cantonments or the reconstruction camps, they could receive treatment from the Federal agencies.

The third class of registrants, C, is an exceptionally interesting one, as it consists of those who may be assigned to clerical duties entirely. There are men who have permanent disabilities which would incapacitate them for work on the firing line. Even to attempt to place them in active work would be unjust to them and of no value to the nation.

As has been shown by examinations of experts in mental hygiene, there are men whose nervous systems would not permit them to be where there is artillery fire. They are unfitted to withstand shell shock for reasons that may be hereditary and constitutional. There are others with marked heart murmurs who would hardly be able to go through a battle where there is continuous cannonading. Many men have serious hernia, others lack muscular strength and are unfit by nature for the rigors of camp and trench. Deafness, serious eye defects and similar deficiencies would bar such from active participation in modern warfare.

The Government recognizes, however, that many of these registrants have exceptional mental abilities and have training and experience which would be of great benefit to the nation. They would therefore be assigned to desk positions. They would be under medical supervision with instructions to report for examination at stated intervals.

It might be that some of these after voluntarily undergoing treatment might be able to qualify eventually for active duty. We must consider, however, that we can never expect too much of the men in this division, for a registrant who has undergone an abdominal operation may not be fit for anything at all in the way of active duty for six months.

The convalescence from operations which may be called capital ones is often



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prolonged. Men who suffer from chronic diseases may also be subject to a lack of courage or of stamina, which is due entirely to physical causes and for which they should not be held to an accountability too strict. To deal with them in a high handed manner would savor of Teutonic autocracy.

The fourth class, D, includes those who are absolutely unsuited for any kind of military duty. First of all no consumptive can be admitted into the United States army. In this division would be men who are crippled or very much under size, the lame, the halt and the blind, the deformed. To such as these the military arm of the Government has no mission, but there is much which can be done for them by the various civic and philanthropic agencies. The National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis is already making arrangements to aid in these cases.

The fact that a man is in class D is not justification for his not considering himself a factor in the ultimate victory. By taking the best medical advice and conserving what powers he has he may do many things for the cause. He can increase his earning capacity, aid in civil life in many ways and by protecting his own health as best he can safeguard the wellbeing of the men and women who are more capable of sustained action.

Learns How to Fit Himself

The announcement which appears on page 17 of the Red Cross hand book is of especial value in this connection:

"The War Department," to quote from it, "will give to every man rejected for physical reasons a circular of advice authorized by the Provost Marshal-General which will point out the opportunity and duty of the individual to seek treatment and get well. To a large extent the future of such men must lie in their own hands and the chief force for their reclamation will be that of educational influence and sympathetic advice."

The effects of the new draft regulations on the whole will be to strengthen American manhood at every point. Those who survive the perils and the rigors of war will return stronger and better citizens of the republic. Even those who will be held on this side of the water for sedentary duties may, through constant supervision by physicians, be rejuvenated. The young will not habitually neglect their bodies only to discover when too late that their systems are undermined by maladies of which, had they been taken in hand promptly, they might have been cured.

There is now concentrated in the army medical service and in the Council of National Defence the cream of the profession of medicine. The Government is, therefore, organizing not only for military victory but for triumph over disease and physical inefficiency in civil life. This is a comforting thought at the present time when we are confronted daily with much that is grewsome and depressing. Surely we may all accept the words of one who at this great national crisis has shown himself so normal and so serene, the President of the United States, who so wisely said:

"It is not an army that we must shape and train for war, it is a nation."

Sounds One Cannot Hear

IN the sense of hearing numerous problems have interested the experimental psychologist. Among these may be mentioned the range of sounds that can be heard by an individual, that is, the limit both below and above which no sound can be heard.

The solution of these problems, the determination of the upper and lower limit of sound, has occasioned a great deal of careful work and the construction of many forms of apparatus. For determining the upper limit of sound for any individual, and individuals differ considerably, the Galton whistle is generally used.

It consists of a tiny pipe, which is lengthened or shortened by a piston adjusted by a micrometer screw. This little instrument can be regulated to make a tone which is too high for any human ear

to hear and which will finally produce only a painful sensation.

The Galton whistle was devised by Francis Galton for his study of individual differences. He had one of the whistles built into the end of his cane and as he walked through the Zoological Gardens in London he would blow it near the ears of the various animals. He adjusted the whistle too high for his own ear to hear, and if the various animals responded to the sound he knew that their upper limit was greater than that of the human ear.

The ordinary human ear can detect a tone whose vibration rate is at least 25,000 vibrations a second, while the whistle will produce 50,000 a second. This upper limit varies with the age of the individual to such an extent that, if the upper limit at 16 years of age were 50,000 vibrations, at 60 years of age it would be about 25,000 a second.