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BLEASE OPENED CAMPAIGN HERE

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sented, I ask your indulgence to quote from the original speeches which I made upon this subject, about which so much has been said and written in the press of the state, and from which extracts here and there have been misquoted, in order that I may show to you from the record, and not from hearsay, how brutally, coldly and utterly false are the accusations which have been made against me for political purposes, in order that the will of the people might again be defeated in South Carolina this summer, and the state retained under the ring rule of a miserable autocracy or a band of ruthless aristocrats.

I was invited to deliver an address in Danville, Va., which I did on the 16th of May, 1917. In that speech, in referring to the war, I said, as reported in the Bee and in the Register, the leading afternoon and morning newspapers of the city of Danville, which certainly could not be charged with being for or against me, as they are far removed from political conditions in South Carolina:

The Bee, in using an interview with me the afternoon before the speech,

"Mr. Blease makes no denial that he is a pacifist, but he is equally firm in saying that, now that this nation is at war, every man and woman should do all that is possible to preserve the unity of the nation in its great set purpose. He is also ready to serve at his station in the firing line should it ever become necessary to call out men of his class into the war, and intimated that nothing could stop him from fighting with the men of his state if a German invasion of this country or Mexico were attempted. He also stated that he had offered to raise a brigade, and was ready to raise one of as fine fighting men as ever shouldered a gun."

The Register, in reporting my speech next morning said: "He (Blease) stated frankly that had he been a member of congress or a senator he would have voted against war with Germany, but we are in the war now," he continued. "Now it is to do

it, because, as I have said, I wish it could be read by every man in South Carolina. But these newspapers are not for the fair thing. They would not publish it in full then and they will not do it now. Their object is not to give the truth with reference to me or my party, but to hide the truth, as it has always been.

At Filbert, I made another speech which these same newspapers took great pains to misrepresent. There I reiterated my Pomaria speech, and denounced Governor Manning, George W. Cromer and David R. Coker, who had, without justification or excuse, accepted lies that were published with reference to my Pomaria speech, and said to the Council of Defense in Columbia, that I had made traitorous utterances. I may spoken harshly of these men. I have no doubt that I did. But you must remember what they had falsely said about me. I did not mince words in denouncing them in the most vigorous terms I could command, and if I ever have an opportunity to meet any of them face to face on the rostrum, what I said then will be repeated a little stronger, if possible. But I have no idea that they will ever give me the privilege of facing them before the people. In fact, since my Filbert speech I have not heard of their mentioning my name either in public or private. They seem to have been silenced in that regard.

I also have this Filbert speech and it will give me great pleasure to furnish it to the anti-Reform press, which has had so much to say about it, if they will publish it.

At Pickens, on August 25, 1917, in another speech, which has been maliciously and falsely misquoted by the anti-Reform press, I said:

"I have stated, and do not hesitate now to state, that I was opposed to this war, because I saw no compelling reason for us to go into it. I am still opposed to it, for I have as yet neither read nor heard of any such reason for our going into it. It is true that it is said and properly said, 'My country, may she ever be right, but right or wrong, my Country.' I say that, and emphasize it. But it is the duty of our leaders—those who are in the front and whom we send to represent us in the highest councils of our nation, always to inform themselves thoroughly and see that our country is right, and when they fail to do this, the constitution of this great republic of ours gives us the privilege to criticize them for their actions in a proper manner, and to petition them for a redress of our grievances, and we have that right and none can take it from us. And if they will not listen to us we have a right to sweep them from office at the next election, and to send to Washington as our representatives men who do listen to the voice of those they are supposed to serve, and not to boss."

No man wants the United States to back down, or curl its tail and run, but if we can have an honorable peace without slaughtering our young manhood, who can object? Let each man instead of bombast and billingsgate, answer this question: Are you in favor of an honorable peace—peace without sacrifice of principle? Let him answer that plainly and distinctly, and then next year we will know how each man stands. I believe in every man doing his duty in this war emergency, and have made myself as clear as I could along that line. I believe in every man doing his duty wherever he is placed and in whatever situation he may find himself. I have had men to come to me with the offer of fees to test the constitutionality of the draft law. I have refused to discuss the matter with them, except to state that it is every man's duty to obey the law of the land. That has been the doctrine which I have tried to preach throughout and it is in thorough accord with my desire for peace. I was consulted in Columbia, a committee came to me in Anderson, and today others have seen me in regard to employing me to contest the law as to conscription. I said to all that I was and am opposed to conscription, but I advised them and advise them now not to contest that law, but to obey it even if it be to the death, for I do not believe that it would do any good to contest it in the courts, because I am of the opinion that no court, not even the supreme court, would have the nerve to declare it unconstitutional in the face of congress. You would, therefore, be wasting your money and creating agitation for nothing. Let us all obey the laws of our state and our nation. I am not a pessimist. I always look on the bright side of life, and I console myself now with the thought that it has been the history of the world, in accordance with the slow, but steady progress of the human race, that the darkest night is ever followed by the brightest dawn, and my prayer is that from the gloom that ensnares the land and sea will speedily emerge a more splendid day than any of the days which have gone before, and that human nature will be softened by the blood that has been spilled and by the tears that have been shed and by the prayers of widows and orphans that have ascended to the throne of a pitying God. But we have a part for humanity, a stern duty which looks towards the speediest honorable peace, and in order that we may perform that duty well, let us ever keep in mind that noble sentiment of the poet: 'This, above all, to thine own self be true and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.'

That speech, my fellow-citizens, I delivered just seven months ago.

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At Chapin, in Lexington county, on August 30, 1917, I said, as reported by the Lexington Dispatch, the leading paper of that county:

"At the outset Mr. Blease paid a magnificent tribute to the men who wore the grey, as well as to the cause for which they fought. Later he urged the people to stand by the government now, right or wrong; and called upon the young men to now don the proverbial khaki instead of the honored grey. *** Mr. Blease closed with an impassioned and earnest plea to his friends (for if there be any place on earth where the former governor can claim the privilege of having friends it is in the Dutch Fork section of Lexington), to stand by the flag and to do their parts in the present crisis with the same courage and fervor of spirit which characterized their acts of the sixties."

In response to one of the invitations which I had to make an address to a mass meeting, at which it had been hinted to me that there might be a test of the draft law proposed, I wrote the committee: "I was and am opposed to conscription, but since our nation is in the war we must not discourage but on the contrary we must encourage every man to do his full duty and to obey to the letter the law of his state and his nation, and only along this line have I spoken or can I speak. All men have the right to petition congress upon any line that they please, as is being done, but no one should encourage any man not to obey the laws of his country and his God."

That was on August 15, 1917.

That is the record, my fellow-citizens, and I leave it to any fair-minded man as to whether or not the speeches I have made breathe aught but loyalty to principle, to country and to God.

Loud sounding phrases, however, have never yet won a war. Men may parade up and down the state and the nation telling in eloquent words of the traditions and glory and prowess of the American people, but victory is to be won by the men who fight and the man who work, and who show their faith by their deeds.

To the fullest extent of my ability, mentally, physically and financially, I have done all that I could to aid my country in this her time of need, and when in my judgment men should not be unjustly accusing other men of disloyalty and attempting to nag at and drive others from doing their duty, but should be endeavoring to preserve a solid unity among ourselves, to keep down bickerings, in order that we may present a solid phalanx to fight the common enemy. If you will again excuse me for being personal, in order to show you how maliciously I have been misrepresented to the people of my state, I desire to make known to you my attitude in regard to the war emergency, not only by what I have said, as I have already tried to show you, but by a few of the things that I have done also.

If you will go back as far as last April you will find in the proceedings of one of the fraternities to which I belong, a resolution unanimously adopted, offering our services individually and as a body in any capacity in which we might serve our nation. You will find that at a convention of Reformers held in Columbia in May, resolutions were adopted, unanimously reaffirming our allegiance, and protesting against discriminations practiced in war matters. South Carolina against us by potty politicians here holding high office. That protest was carried to Washington and when I went to the national capital as one of the committee from this convention, I told Provost Marshal General Crowder in the presence of others, that I stood ready and willing, as did all of my friends in South Carolina, to serve the United States government in any capacity, individually or otherwise. I further offered him then to raise a regiment or a brigade of volunteers and put them in the service of the United States, and that I would go with them either as a private or as an officer. All I asked was that the men be allowed to name their own officers. I have repeated that offer to the government as late as last Saturday night. When everything was looking dark and gloomy on the western front I sent the following telegram: "Columbia, S. C., March 23, 1918. Hon. Fred H. Dominick, Member of Congress, Washington, D. C. Tell General Crowder my offer stands, and that I am willing and ready to raise regiment of volunteers now if men are allowed to elect their officers. Our boys are loyal and ready for work. Cole L. Blease."

When the call for the Liberty Loan was made in our State, I went to one of the banks in Columbia and borrowed the money and paid interest on the note and purchased two \$500 Liberty Bonds, and I have them now. I was not financially able at that time to make the purchase, but I knew that the honor of our state was at stake, and I wanted to do my part. I also issued an address, urging my friends to come to the rescue that South Carolina might not fail to raise her quota, and right nobly did they respond. "Let us, the Reformers of South Carolina," I said in that published address, "again come to the rescue in order that the Palmetto flag may not trail in the dust, and in order that the Palmetto state cannot be charged with being short in her support to the American army." Continuing, I said: "However we may have been treated in this state by the civil authorities—ignored, snubbed and charged falsely with various things—we are true to our state and to our nation. We must overlook the lies that have been printed and spoken about us by the anti-press and the prejudiced speakers who have paraded the state. It is hard to take, but we must take it; we must overlook it, and we must

rise above letting it influence us and save the day for our grand old state as we have saved it before. Personally I am a poor man. My expenses are naturally heavy in comparison with my income. There are many calls upon me to which I respond with pleasure to the extent of my ability. But with it all I shall endeavor to make a purchase along the line I suggest, and I ask my friends to join me and let us show to the other crowd that, while you have failed, we as always can win, and while you have robbed us of victories, still we are victorious."

I have day in and day out served the soldier boys at Camp Jackson. Many of them have come to my office and I have helped them in various ways, and endeavored to encourage all of them to do their duty.

It happened to be my fortune to own 41 acres of land near Camp Jackson, with a house and stable on it, which, of course, was of no great value, it having been purchased by me for \$900 at public sale. The government has been needing some land around there for various purposes. They have been securing it, of course, but those of you who have kept up with affairs in and around Columbia know that some people around there have been playing hold-up games in—God save the mark!—the name of patriotism and loyalty. Options on lands around there secured in time by some of the very loyal and patriotic have added to their riches and some of these same people, who have increased their fortunes, have been presented loving cups for their great generosity and public spirit. There was one man there who owns the streetcar system, and he solemnly promised in writing, as one of the inducements to bring the camp there, that he would build a line to the camp and charge only a five-cent fare each way. The camp was located, the line was built, but if anybody has ever yet ridden to the camp for five cents I haven't heard of it. The legislature at its last session, by a practically unanimous vote in both houses, passed an act to make him stand by his agreement and his pledge. That act has been held up for nearly seven weeks by your so-called governor in Columbia, and he is today holding a hearing in his office as to whether or not he shall sign it and make Robertson stand by his agreement. In the meantime the extra nickels have been pouring into the coffers of the Robertson interests increasing a fortune which was made by one Senator Robertson, at the expense of South Carolina, in the terrible and horrible days of radical and

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