

it as commerce advertises its healing oils and fit-right boots and its Aphrodite corsets, then the people will subscribe, tumultuously, roaringly, overwhelmingly.

If not—if that is the kind of nation that we are—let us call our soldiers home from the Western front. They are fighting under a misunderstanding. The homes that they are saving are not worth the sacrifice.

But first let the Government—of the dominions, the provinces, the cities and the towns—itsself begin the campaign of thrift. At present vast sums of money are being wasted in so-called public works, railways in the wilderness, cement sidewalks in the streets, post-offices in the towns—millions and millions that drain away our economic strength. In time of peace these are excellent. For war, unless they have a war purpose, the things are worse than useless. The work of the men who labor at them is of no value, and the food and clothes that they consume must be made by other men.

Let us be done with new streets and new sidewalks, new town halls and new railways, till the war is done. Let us walk in our old boots on the old boards, patriots all, with dollar pieces jingling in our pockets adding up to twenty-five for the latest patriotic loan.

Let us do this, and there will pour into the hands of the Government such a cascade of money that the sound of it shall be heard all the way to Potsdam.

And here enters the last step to be taken under National Thrift to convert ourselves into a war economy. The Government goes with its money to the manufacturers and interrogates them. What can you make, and you, and you? You have a plant that has made buggies and fancy carriages. These our people will not buy because now they walk. But what is it that you can make?—can you turn yourself to making trucks, waggon? You, that made boots and have lost half your trade, what about a hundred thousand boots for the army? You, that made clothes, what about doing the whole thing over in khaki?

The needs of a war Government are boundless, endless. The list of its wants is as wide as the whole range of our manufacture. The adjustment is difficult. Not a doubt of it. It cannot be done in a day. But with each successive month the process would go on and on till we would find ourselves, while working apparently each for himself, altered into a nation of war-workers, every man, in his humble sense, at the front and taking his part.

Meantime we at home are doing nothing, or next to it, for the war. While we go about our business as usual, men are breathing out their lives for us, somewhere in France.

What shall we do?

STEPHEN LEACOCK.