

## National Service League— Its Opportunity

BY PROF. W. S. BLAIR.

The National Service League, as the name implies gives those in the district covered by it an opportunity to give expression to such service in an organized way. There is no cut and dried formula to follow in its management. It is for the members to get together and decide what is best to do that their resources may be mobilized so that the greatest possible good may result. Such a league should be active and closely in touch with the individuals of the district it covers.

The Patriotic Planting Club, organized a year ago, has naturally merged into this league. Two organizations were considered unwise and the latter having broader affiliations, it was decided by the executive to do away with the former. This, it is hoped, meets with your approval.

Every member of such a League is supposed to offer suggestions and lend what aid they can to the executive in deciding on a line of action best calculated to give the service desired. There is no such thing as a few wishing to monopolize the time, or dictate as to a course of action. This meeting is called to give the citizens of this town an opportunity to select officers best calculated to assist in the work. That there is work to do is abundantly clear. It is needless for any one to try to shirk their responsibilities at this time. Every ounce of effort should be directed where it will do the most good. It is not for the individual to decide entirely as to where his efforts will be most productive. It is for an organized body such as this to direct effort along most effective lines.

What about the energies locked up in the boys of our town, is it possible that we would let this go to waste and people in England, France, Italy and Belgium starving, the very sons and daughters of the men who are making your homes secure. We want to know how many boys fit to work can be put to work just as soon as the ground is fit. Are they willing to leave a comfortable home to work on somebody's land, or are you prepared to find productive employment for them. Work they should, we all know. Do you consider education of more importance than this form of service. Under normal conditions nothing would induce one to take a boy from his school, but what does your school, or your vaunted school training count for at this time. Look clearly at the issue and your answer must be—"Use my boy where he will give best present service."

Men of vision are wanted. Out of ten men who see Niagara Falls, nine see water falling over a precipice and but one sees power. Out of the ten who see power, perhaps only one sees a way to harness and utilize it. Who in this building sees a way to utilize the boy energies of our town and make them productive. Is this League prepared for the issue? Are you as citizens, men and women prepared to assist in making use of this energy.

Effort must be directed. Misdirected effort is often of little account. This League is constituted for the purpose of assisting in just such work. The citizens of Kentville were good producers in 1917. They were advised through the press last Fall by this League to prepare large areas for this year. This they no doubt have done. You are in a better position from the experience of last year to do better this year. Your boys can do better. They are bigger and they can work harder, so do not be satisfied with what you did last year, because the demand is more imperative than ever before.

Where is that Young Ladies' Branch of the League? What is the matter with the young ladies of Kentville? How many of those fair hands were soiled in Kentville mud? Yes they were doing Red Cross Work or helping their Mothers in the kitchen no doubt. Denying themselves to serve their country in this life and death struggle. Such we assume was the case. But cannot they do more than they have done. This League aims to make every individual in Kentville a producer in some way or other during 1918. The League is not opposed to pleasure, but if pleasure takes those capable of producing from production, the League should become interested and set its seal of disapproval upon it.

"Fight or Farm" is the motto of this League. We are evidently not prepared to fight so the only alternative is to farm. Physical endurance limits production in the country. The farmer is capable of doing only so much every day, and his capacity to produce may be greatly limited by weather conditions. There is, therefore, an individual responsibility resting upon every town resident to do what he can to make up the deficiency.

If you refuse to farm, the alternative will be actual hunger, and perhaps starvation among the women and children of the Allied Nations. You will not starve. You are close to the base of supplies. You will get your supplies in any case, but what about those hungry children and care worn, half nourished women of our Allies in Europe. What are you doing to release food products for them to live on? It is not what your neighbour proposes to do. It is a personal question with you. You may think you can shirk your responsibility but you cannot. The cost of farm products is due to not having enough to go around. The reason why there is not enough is because there is not the labour available to produce it. You may not be able to grow pigs, steers or wheat, but you can grow potatoes, peas and beans.

We are fast approaching the point where it is not a question of obtaining what we want but what we can get. You need not now substitute unless you wish, but from present indications you will be forced to substitute, owing to the impossibility of getting some necessary exportable products such as wheat, bacon and meat.

It is unnecessary to talk about the shortage in food products. Think of people standing in line for their food supplies. We either must eat less of certain food products, or people across the sea must go hungry. Hungry people may force upon us a premature peace. It is for you to make impossible such an eventuality.

Substitute potatoes where possible. Use three potatoes for dinner rather than one potato and two pieces of bread. To substitute does not necessarily mean cheaper living. The substitute may cost more, but his extra cost should not prevent you from using the substitute. The substitute would be used by the hungry ones only that they cannot get even the substitute and such substitutes are usually unsuitable for export.

Price fixing it is thought by some would correct many ills. Price fixing has tendency to lesson production unless

the price is a very pleasing one, in which case the burden is so great upon the civil population of a country that the greatest hardships result. You have, therefore, to recognize the fact that price fixing is only one factor of a complex problem, and the ultimate gain from such a course is doubtful. Were we dealing with uniform conditions the matter would be different, but the fact that it costs one man \$2.00 per bushels to grow potatoes, while his neighbour produces them for \$1.00, makes it difficult to set a price satisfactory to keep both producing, and at the same time give the people who eat the potatoes an opportunity to get them at a reasonable price. If you satisfy the man producing at a cost of \$2.00, you are working a burden on the consumer, and the one who grew them for \$1.00 is becoming a food profiteer. It is the brains and energy of the farmer that determines the production of his farm more than anything else.

What has been done to assist farmers in Kings County? First—Every effort has been made to furnish farmers of Kings County with an adequate supply of seed of good vitality. It is for them to get it before outside persons do.

Second—The Kings County Farmers Association has taken the stand that our labour resources should be mobilized for work on the land. That all available labour in each locality be carefully canvassed and the co-operation of residents in towns and villages be secured. Volunteers for a few days or a few weeks will help. Business in towns may be curtailed during seeding to enable employees of stores, offices and factories to assist farmers, the labour wants of the County to be made known at an early date. This to be done by a Provincial Labour Bureau or other central body organized for this purpose by the Government. If necessary, let men capable for farm work be drafted wherever they can be found.

Labour waste should be avoided. There is nothing more trying than to see men in our towns when they should be on the farm working. We are apt to misjudge, however, for as a matter of fact, certain farmers may be able to work their lands, and other farms be entirely unfit for working at the same time. So often too Sunday work may be possible on the land, owing to favourable weather, and to avoid this waste the Food Controller should decree it unlawful and unpatriotic to waste labour on any day, Sundays included. That would help farmers a whole lot and relieve the food situation materially. Probably our Church leaders will ask that this be done. Certainly here is practical service they can render and Christian service too in harmony with the wants of civilization.

## The Vacant Lot In National Service

The present year, and particularly the Spring of 1918 is the time when the people of the world, of Canada, of Nova Scotia and of Kentville must put forth their maximum effort toward a greater National production of foodstuffs. The increase of the farm and garden crops is the basis of all our possible future prosperity. The hope of Canada lies largely in the efficiency of her agriculture. The Empire may depend upon the farmers of Canada doing their full duty toward greater production. They recognize the seriousness of the situation. They need no flag waving processions along the highways, no martial music to stimulate their patriotism. The farmers of Canada have answered all calls. They have given of their sons, of their money and of their labours. They have refused nothing and in consequence of their abundant generosity, today we find the farmer crippled. Already the farmer hears the repeated calls from Europe demanding greater production in 1918, and although he is inspired by all patriotic feeling, still his efforts can only be proportionate to the amount of labour fertilizer and money he has at his disposal. The stern requirements of our Empire fighting the greatest world conflict, have done much to cripple our agricultural leadership and deplete our supply of farm labour. Likewise the fertilizer supply has become seriously hampered, owing to immense amounts of the crude materials being used in munition works, and to the lack of transportation facilities to bring it to our doors. A business without capital is a failure. Farming is a business, therefore, to farm without capital can have but one result—Failure—But what have the capitalists of Canada done for Agriculture? What have you the citizens of Kentville done for the farmers in your vicinity? Have you given them the credit they deserve, or have you been lured away by the greed for gold and the glamour of the artificial trades until you have lost sight of the most important man in the community, the producer of Real wealth, the farmer. These are the facts that the man on the farm faces today, and although he is ready to do his work, work that requires all of his energies from daylight to dark with no thought of pleasure except that which he probably takes at Church on a Sunday afternoon, but he also looks to you town people, to you people of Kentville to, give him all the support possible in supplying him with labour, helping him finance his undertakings, and relieving him of the necessity of producing vegetables products, products that require a great deal of time that he could employ elsewhere to better serve his Nation, and with more profit to himself. It is upon this latter phase of the situation that I am going to confine your attention. Why is the world today suffering from a food shortage? You can all answer that question? Because we are at war, which means that there are tens of millions of men turned from the processes of production to be consumers and devastators of crops. Men, horses and motive power are devoted to destruction. Millions of acres of land that a few years ago were classed among the most fertile farm lands of the world, are today devastated battle fields, producing nothing, but marked here and there with little groups of wooden crosses that mark the place where some heroic soul gave his all that we might be spared the sorrow and suffering that Belgium has had to bear. Therefore, is it not our duty, or rather, is it not a privilege, that they have made possible for us to be able to work on unmolested here, to put forth every effort this Spring to produce vegetables enough in our own gardens to supply our own needs and probably the needs of others so that the farmer may devote his entire time to the production of crops that can be utilized by the Allies. Let us make it known to the neighbouring farmers that we are going to do this so that he may plan his work accordingly. Let us urge them to give up the production of garden truck and put their energies in the growing of grain, hay and root crops that he can harvest and feed to live stock, which in turn can be manufactured into beef and bacon to feed our soldiers, and the

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### "PRISONERS PERSONAL PARCEL" SCHEME FOR PRISONERS OF WAR OTHER THAN OFFICERS INTERNED ABROAD.

Post Office Department, Canada, Ottawa, Jan. 31, 1918.

The British War Office has sanctioned an arrangement whereby one parcel which does not contain other than specified articles may be sent each 3 months by private individuals in Canada direct to prisoners of war other than officers interned abroad. The parcel must be packed and despatched through the post office by the relative or friend of the prisoner and must bear a coupon.

The next of kin has first right to the coupon and can designate to whom it may be given if they do not wish to use it. Persons wishing to send parcels under this scheme should apply for the necessary coupons, if they have not already done so, as early as possible. Coupons for parcels intended for prisoners belonging to the Canadian Forces are supplied by the Prisoners of War Department, Canadian Red Cross Society, 14 Cockspar St., London, S. W. 1, and in the case of prisoners belonging to the Imperial Forces, Allied Forces or Civilian prisoners of war, by the Central Prisoners of War Committee, 4 Thurlow Place, London, S. W. 7 The list of goods which may be forwarded is as follows:—

Pips, Sponge, Pencils, Tooth powder, Pomade, Cap badge and badges of rank, Shaving brush, Safety razor, Bootlaces (mohair), Candies (8 ounces), Medal ribbons, Brass polish, Mittens (one pair a quarter), Muffler (one each year), Braces and belts (provided they are made of webbing and include no rubber or leather), Housewife, Handkerchiefs (one a quarter), Combs, Hair brushes, Tooth brushes, Cloth brushes, Pipe lights, Dubbin, Hob nails, Shing soap (one stick a quarter), Health salts, Insecticide powder, Chess, Checkers, Dominoes. Persons are warned that the parcels are subject to censorship, and the inclusion in the parcel of any article not mentioned in the above list may entail confiscation of the parcel. The maximum weight of the parcel is eleven pounds, and it is advised that they should not weigh less than three pounds, so as to minimize the risk of loss in the post.

### A WHALE OF A TIME.

Praise Whale Steak Luncheon. NEW YORK, Feb. 8—A score or more scientists and business men interested in food conservation and new sources of food supply sat down today to a "whale steak luncheon" at the American Museum of Natural History. When it was over, they declared the big mammal furnished as delicious and appetizing a dish as any meat market affords.

The menu included cold whale hash in jelly, whale pot au feu, planked whale steak, a la Vancouver, and boiled skate. Celery, radishes and war bread completed the meal. The chief announced other methods of preparing the leviathan, including stews, pot roasts, whale en casserole, bruised whale curried whale on toast, deep sea pie, whale croquettes and whale cutlets, all of which may be tried later.

Guests at the luncheon included Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary and the local Food Administrator, Arthur William.

### BOSTON LEADS U. S. CITIES IN NUMBER OF BRITISH RECRUITS.

Boston, Feby. 5—Boston led the cities of the United States in the number of men recruited last march for the British forces, the British-Canadian recruiting mission announced today. Six hundred and seventy-eight men were accepted for service out of 1,026 examined in this city. New York was next with 428 men accepted.