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WE ARE AT WAR

seven days afterward, might have saved us from the worst naval defeat this country has suffered in its one hundred and sixty-six years of history, and whether we might have been saved also the sorrow and loss caused by the deaths of nearly 3,000 who were killed there.

The experiment continued. According to press dispatches, during the seventy-seven days of prohibition in Oahu, there were 268 arrests, an average of 3.3 daily. When prohibition was discontinued by military order, the first day there were seventeen men and five women convicted of drunkenness, and during the next thirty days the average number of arrests was over twenty-one—more than six times the average during the seventy-seven days of prohibition. Barrooms, taverns, beerhalls, and cocktail lounges are not fitting schools for soldiers who have a world war on their hands, and Army officials who think otherwise should reassign the thinking to competent heads. Van Loon told us that Singapore "maintains a set of barrooms the splendor of which is famous all over the Orient." How much this had to do with the collapse of the Gibraltar of the East has not yet been evaluated.

The American Business Men's Research Foundation not long ago issued a statement in which were these words, "beverage alcohol has played an amazing part in undermining and ultimately bringing about the defeat of practically every nation that has lost the crucial decision on the field of battle or in conflict with other people. Liquor has defeated more men, more armies, more nations than any other cause." In 1925, the famous French editor, Payot, wrote, "Alcoholism, under the indifferent eye of the authorities, is, indeed, destroying the nation." As recently as the French debacle, the verdict of the government was, "Alcohol was the chief cause of the French armies' collapse, and the worst of France's four greatest problems." General Petain, with tears in his voice if not in his eyes, said, "Our soldiers were drunk and could not fight. Since the victory of the World War, the spirit of pleasure, of riotous living and drinking has prevailed over the spirit of sacrifice." France was at that time consuming on an average of two and a half quarts of alcoholic beverage a week per person, the largest amount of any nation in the world. That is the way France drank her way to victory. All the great nations now at war, with the single exception of our own, have made somewhat drastic regulations for the curtailment of the use of beverage alcohol.

The day after the election in 1932, the Brewery News said, "Not one-tenth of one per cent of the youth of America know the taste of real beer—we must educate them." The Brewers' Digest for May, 1941, enthused in the following words:

"One of the finest things that could have happened to the brewery industry was the insistence by high ranking officers to make beer available at army camps.

"The opportunity presented to the brewing industry by this measure is so obvious that it is superfluous to go into detail.

"Here is the chance for brewers to cultivate a taste for beer in

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millions of young men who will eventually constitute the largest beer-consuming section of our population."

And they were right! Nothing seems to be plainer than that we are all out for the brewers and distillers. Every large industry in this country has been curtailed except the liquor industry. Cameras, radio sets, and firearms in the possession of aliens, about which we have been making such a fuss, might do some harm to our war effort, but how insignificant compared with the liquor interest which is not only not hindered but actually encouraged! Housewives are being rationed in sugar, but alcohol is still being made from sugar or molasses. The beer and whisky trucks have tire priority, the milk delivery trucks have not. Babies in the home can be deprived of milk and sugar, but the distillers go blithely on their way, the favored children of Washington. Nothing shows more clearly liquor's favored position than its exemption from the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

On December 31, 1941, there were over 511,000,000 gallons of whisky stocked in warehouses in this country, a five years' supply. This could readily be redistilled to produce alcohol for the manufacture of munitions, but so far not one gallon has been touched for this purpose. We are sacrificing our energy and resources to build ships, for this is now our greatest need. Why ships? Well, for one thing, to send grain to Great Britain to be returned to us as Scotch whisky. Are we insane?

Isn't it about time we became serious about this war? Do we want to win it, or do we want to forget about it in a national drunken debauch? Three things have been designated time and again as absolutely essential to winning the war. What are they? First, the health of the people; second, the wealth of the people, and third, the morale of the people. Let us look at them.

Health. One medical authority in this country lists our five most serious health problems as: alcohol, tuberculosis, venereal disease, cancer, and heart troubles—and he places alcohol first. Isn't that somewhat extreme? Not at all! One of our large insurance companies reports that during the last decade rejections for heavy alcoholic indulgence have increased from 12 per cent to 34 per cent. One-third of insurable men and women who are condemned as unsafe risks for insurance, are rejected because of drink. From 1932 to 1936, the first four years of Repeal, rejections by one company on account of drinking increased 35 per cent. Insurance companies are hard-boiled business institutions, and can't afford to make mistakes.

But this is not all; alcohol is not only a serious problem in its own right, but two of the other problems are aggravated by it. For years we have known that tuberculosis is made more dangerous by the use of alcohol, and some physicians say that as many as 90 per cent of venereal infections are contracted when under the influence of alcohol. The New York State Liquor Authority has said, "The more alcohol, the more syphilis."

Alcohol is a serious contributing factor to two other major health problems: insanity and accidents. Psychiatrists are much concerned about the