

for instance, and while nothing should be done to hinder individual initiative in publishing such books, it would seem that when it was apparent that some branch of science required such a monograph a national society might very well approach well-known workers in the field and request them to write such a book, offering its assistance in the matter of bibliography and also offering to arrange for the publication of the manuscript. The initiative in indicating the need for such a book might come in the form of suggestions from members of the society or other scientific men. It is quite true that at the present time the scientific publishers are extremely active in searching for suitable books to publish, but necessarily they must consider the probable demand rather than the actual need for a book, and this leads to an over-production of books dealing with those fields of science which have a large following and an insufficient supply of books in those fields where the workers are few, though for progress the more sparsely worked fields would seem to require almost as much representation in literature as those which are of wider interest.

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ROCHESTER, N. Y.,  
October 26, 1917

#### THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE FOOD SITUATION<sup>1</sup>

ACCORDING to the calendar it is almost a year to the day since my last meeting with you. Judged by the experiences through which we have passed, it seems more like a generation. Then this country was at peace, though its patience was being sorely tried.

<sup>1</sup> From an address given by Secretary of Agriculture Houston, addressing the Thirty-first Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experimental Stations in Washington on November 14.

Now it is at war for reasons which I need not discuss before this body. It had no alternative. It either had to fight or to admit that it had no honor, was not a free nation, and would henceforth be subjected to a medieval power that in the last analysis knows no law but might. The nation was living on a peace basis and was not fully prepared for war in any respect; but it was fortunately circumstanced in the character of its agricultural organization and the number and efficiency of its expert agencies.

The nation may well pride itself on the fact that it had had the foresight generations ago to lay deep its agricultural foundations. I congratulate the representatives of the land grant colleges on the fine opportunity for service presented to them and on the splendid way in which they have seized it. The Department of Agriculture has had great comfort in the thought that these institutions, ably planned and wisely directed, existed in every part of the nation and stood ready not only to place themselves at the service of the national government but also to take the initiative in a vast number of directions.

When a state of war was declared on April 6, the food situation was unsatisfactory. The need of action was urgent and the appeal for direction was insistent. The nation looked for guidance primarily to the federal department and to the state agencies which it had so liberally supported for many generations. It was not disappointed. In a two-days' session at St. Louis, the trained agricultural officers of the country conceived and devised a program of legislation, organization and practice the essential features of which have not been successfully questioned and the substantial part of which has been enacted into law and set in operation. This great democracy revealed its inherent strength.

To the normal forces of the government leading with agriculture and rural problems there has been added an emergency agency with great and unusual powers, with enormous possibilities for good, and with a remark-

able record for achievements already to its credit. It has enlisted in its ranks men of wide experience, fine spirit, and high ideals, many of whom are gladly volunteering their services for the common cause. I refer to the Food Administration under the direction of Mr. Hoover.

The relation between this agency and the other organized agricultural forces of the nation is intimate and fundamental. It is impossible completely to disassociate them and it would be undesirable to do so.

The problem in part is a common one, and it is of the first importance that the work be done in the closest cooperation and with an eye single for the public good. There is no need for undue duplication of effort and no causes of friction which can not be removed through an intelligent conception by each agency of the powers and purposes of all and by a spirit of mutual accommodation. In a broad way it is agreed that the prime function of the Department of Agriculture shall be the stimulation of production, the conservation of products on the farm through all the normal and approved processes, the promotion of better marketing and distribution of products from the farms to the markets, the prosecution of the work in home economics along usual lines, the dissemination of information, and the extension of all these activities as authorized by law. In a similar way the principal function of the Food Administration is the control and regulation of commercial distribution of foods; that is, of products which have reached the markets, are in the channels of distribution or in the hands of consumers, their conservation by consumers, the elimination of waste, and the handling of foods and feeds in the market by legal means through its regular officials as well as through its volunteer agencies.

In the main the Department of Agriculture deals with all the processes of farming up to the time products reach the market until they are in the requisite form for consumption and are available for the purpose. At

this point the Food Administration enters and exercises its wide powers of regulation, direction, and suggestion. Where the Food Administration through its powers can be of assistance to the Department of Agriculture in its field, it is at liberty freely to make suggestion, and, when necessary, to cooperate in execution; and the same relation obtains as to the department's participation in Food Administration matters in which it has a vital interest and toward the promotion of which it can be of assistance. This is the substance of the agreement originally entered into between the Food Administration and the Department of Agriculture, and will be more satisfactorily observed as the agents and divisions of the two departments familiarize themselves more fully with their tasks and with the prescribed lines of effort.

Obviously the making of a program for the agricultural activities of the nation did not end with the St. Louis conference. Thought, action, and cooperation between the members of this association and other state agencies on the one hand and the federal department on the other have been continuous. Attention has been given without cessation to problems in the field of labor. It was obvious that difficulties would be presented and that apprehension would run beyond the actual condition. An army could not be raised without taking men from every field of activity; and it would have been unfair to any class of workers in the community to have proposed its exemption. It was impossible in the haste of the first draft satisfactorily to work out in detail the principle of selective service; but, nevertheless, under the regulations, consideration was given throughout by exemption boards and by the officers of the War Department to the needs of agriculture. With ampler time at its disposal, the War Department has worked out a system of classification which gives due regard to the necessity of retaining skilled farmers and expert agricultural leaders on the farms and ranches and in the educational and administrative services.