

The Citizen Veteran

UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IS STILL PROBLEM

The unemployment situation among the veterans of the world war continues to be a problem. Members of the employment department of the American Legion are making every effort possible to obtain work for their comrades. Scores of veterans with wives and families are entirely destitute and willing to do anything possible to obtain food and clothing for themselves and their dependents.

Idle minds breed and absorb radical doctrine. Employment will save many men from turning radical. Veterans who know of places where men may obtain work should not hesitate to communicate with Glen Tieser, American Legion employment department, Main 5347. Employers who are filled with patriotism in 1917-18, doffed their hats when the flag passed by and shed their coats of the khaki-clad troops marched away to war, should have a revival of that same spirit, and fulfill promises that have been broken.

There is no excuse for Japanese, alien enemies and conscientious objectors being retained in remunerative positions in the city of Portland when real men are without appreciation of their country, walk the streets begging for work.

BY HARRY B. CRITCHLOW.

WAR history has always given a generous place to the exploits of the engineers, but even so the glory achieved by the doughboy has more or less obscured the acts of the men of the pick and shovel. There is not a man who in the first few days following September 26, 1918, tramped over that congested road between Nevilly and Yverness but will remember the work of the engineers.

The Germans in their departure had exploded mines and for a distance of almost a quarter of a mile had blown up a well-paved highway until all that remained was one great hole over which no automobile could hope to pass. Every available engineer was put to work. With picks, shovels, scrapers and every implement at their disposal they worked unceasingly until repairs were made and the vehicles laden with munitions were enabled to make way to the doughboys at the front.

At the front the engineers were required to do most of their work at night. Then, many times when dawn came and they had retired to their bunkholes for slumber, it became necessary for them to shoulder the ever-present trenching tools and place in the line beside their comrades, the doughboys. There was no easy task.

The 11th engineers have a little place all their own in the history of the world war. They were the first American troops on the line and took their place with the British on the Somme on August 14, 1917. When the Germans were breaking through a few days later, these men, then requiring demolished railroads, dug their picks and shovels and with bayonets on rifles aided in driving back the enemy. On this day, September 5, the first casualties of the American expeditionary forces were suffered when a sergeant and a private were wounded.

Those men who went into Flanders in the late days of the war will recall the feat accomplished by the 11th engineers when they, under intense artillery fire of the enemy, constructed a pontoon bridge over the Escaut (Scheldt) river at Audenarde and permitted the passage of troops and vehicles to the front line.

Everywhere a man went in France he found the engineers. Upon the docks of St. Nazaire, Dunkirk, Le Havre and other ports there were thousands of such troops, unloading cargoes from munitions ships. They were found constructing railroads and running engines drawing cars loaded with material to the advance sectors. They were found in the forests felling timber, running the saws, doing their share in making successful the campaigns of the Yanks.

After the armistice had been signed and the members of the 11th engineers continued at their work. The roads to be repaired, devastated regions to be cleaned up and a thousand and one things to be done that only colonels and second lieutenants can imagine.

A veteran of most any engineer's outfit that saw service across the water during the war has had his days of toil and trouble. He is not the least of the heroes of the war.

"The Fighting Engineers" was the title of a bit of verse written by H. Varley and republished in a book of the same name. It is as follows:—

We dug up husky mountains by the roots.
We spanned the rushing torrent with a bridge.
We laid the rails to guide the steam-charged brutes
That led the men and guns at Cambrai Ridge.

We built a road through slush and sump mud.
While dodging shells the German "minnie" sent.
We did the job and saw that it was good—
And then we heard another call—and went.

The pick and shovel dropped from every hand.
We didn't even notice where they fell.
We crawled or climbed or ran in No Man's Land.
To bring back the tortured souls from worse than hell.

And then the Germans came—we had to fight.
With something near to joy we grabbed the guns.
For they were waiting many a day and night.
To send our deadly greeting to the Hun.

With British Tommies we stood face to face.
With death—and counted it the chance.
Of all—to be with them in that red place.
To live and fight and make the mark of France.

From trench and shell-hole all the fight was won.
Then we came back, each from his living grave—
Save those whose living fighting days were done.

So when the story of the war is told
Let one small chapter tell our little tale.
Say that we helped the thin first line to hold—
That when the big test came we did not fail.

Scruggam, Carson City, Nev.; William P. Deegan, New York; Joseph H. Thompson, Pittsburgh; James A. Drain, Washington, D. C.; George L. Berry, Pressman's Home, Tulsa; Walter M. Brucker, Saginaw, Mich.; John Thomas Taylor, Washington, D. C.; John D. Markey, Frederick, Md.; Aaron Sklarov, Lexington, Ky.; John H. Sherbourne, Boston; Paul Edwards, Seattle, Wash.

A minstrel show staged recently by Brownsville post of the American Legion netted a tidy sum of money for the building fund. All of the talent for the show and the orchestra was supplied by the American Legion.

During the last week smokers were held by the legion posts of Dallas, Heppner and Lone. Boxing bouts were featured on all three programmes and large crowds attended.

Activities of the American Legion in Lane county will be controlled by a council which has been organized among the posts of the district. The council will meet at the district headquarters.



William M. Beveridge, member of the executive committee of the Portland post, American Legion.

posts in the council are: Eugene, Junction City, Springfield, Crockett and Cottage Grove. Dr. D. P. Lowe of Junction City is president and Ralph Jackson of Eugene, secretary. The purpose of the organization is to establish unified effort in all matters pertaining to the former service men.

If the "efficiency expert" who devalued the American legion membership card and record scheme could realize how many times he is being cursed each day by post adjutants and individual members, he doubtless would think less of his plan than he did when the national organization adopted it.

Every time a member comes in to Portland post and pays his dues, Irving Kafka, assistant adjutant, must write out five cards. He cannot do this without keeping the member waiting and is required to go to the expense of writing letters and paying postage to each member who has paid his dues.

When the member receives his card he finds that it is entirely too large to fit his cardcase. He takes his knife and in an atmosphere made profane with his remarks he carves down the card to a respectable size.

The new system requires that cards be made out as follows: One for national headquarters, one for the regional headquarters and one for the American Legion Weekly.

The system will work out all right with a small post, having a membership of approximately 100, but when it comes to a post with a membership of No. 1, it becomes a nuisance and a millstone around the neck of the assistant adjutant, whose troubles are already of sufficient volume.

Thomas Maguire, Cicero Hogan, Ray Daniel, Ping Bodie and a number of other men who served with the 148th field artillery in France will vouch for the story that is to follow, so if there is a dispute over the details the "book" is passed to them.

Major Nickerson, one of the battalion commanders of the organization, was a great hand to require his entire staff to accompany him when going on reconnaissance. Many times this requirement was not greatly appreciated by the individual members of the staff. One day when the 148th was on the Champagne front the major decided he would make a reconnaissance of the German lines. He loaded his staff, which included a short and fat lieutenant who was acting as a brilliant officer, into the touring car and headed for the line.

The machine had passed through a grove of trees and had entered an open space when the fat lieutenant of the wood came a number of Germans closely pursued by a detachment of Frenchmen.

The driver stopped the car and insisted on turning around.

"No, this will be very interesting," said the major. "We must see 'Lieutenant,' please hand me my glasses."

There was no response from the lieutenant, who had been in the rear seat.

"This, indeed, will be interesting," repeated the major.

There was no response from the lieutenant. The major looked around and saw that the lieutenant had left the machine. He glanced down the road and saw the officer disappearing into the woods as fast as he could go.

"Come back here," commanded the major, and the lieutenant reluctantly returned.

From then on, until the Frenchman had either killed or captured the Germans, the fat lieutenant was required to "observe" what the major had termed "interesting."

posts. There the Germans saw them. By this time the main body of troops had been withdrawn from the trenches. The Boche imagined that the ridge was heavily manned and turned on their explosives. The 50 Tommies who had volunteered were slain to eternity. It was a sacrifice they willingly made for their country.

Dr. Richardson tells another story that is worthy.

He was in charge of an advance dressing station on the Somme in 1916. Hundreds of men were being brought before him for examination and orders were that every available man was to be sent back to the line for man-power was low.

In hobbled an Australian.

"What's your trouble?" asked Dr. Richardson.

"Kicked by a German officer," sir," was the reply.

"What kind of a story's that?" inquired the doctor.

"Kicked by a German officer, sir," replied the man. "Take a look at that knee."

The knee was swollen twice its normal size. He wished that they had killed me. I did not tell them anything.

"There was a big rock in that dugout and I was the one to pick it up and carry it from one end of the dugout to the other. It was awful pain with this knee."

"You better go back to the rear," interrupted the officer.

"Please let me tell my story, sir," continued the soldier. At one end of the dugout I saw three hand grenades on the floor. I sat down the rock, picked up two of the grenades. The first grenade I threw and it landed in the opening, dropping one of the grenades on the Germans as I did. The first grenade got two of them. The other two I threw and they were still alive but wounded and he shot at me as I was getting away. I released the pin on the second grenade and rolled it in on him. He'll kick no more Australians."

Walter L. Toose, Jr., chairman of the state legislative committee of the American Legion, was in Portland during the week and spoke before the state legislature on the subject of the American Legion's new duties with the legislative committee require considerable time. Recently he devoted five days to gathering information on a Klamath Falls land project to send to Oregon's delegation in Washington, to be used in soldier aid legislation.

Veterans of batteries A and B, field artillery of the Oregon national guard, will hold their annual dinner in the Imperial hotel at 6:30 o'clock Saturday evening, February 4. Every veteran or present member of the two organizations is being urged to attend the gathering.

A membership drive will be started by the Portland post of the American Legion at the meeting to be held Monday night, February 6, in the new clubrooms at Fourth and Washington streets.

The executive committee last week voted to suspend the initiation fee of \$2 during February. Efforts will be made substantially to increase the membership.

"We are not making any estimate of the number of men we hope to bring into the post," declared Adjutant McKay yesterday. "All we know is that we are going out to bring in all we can. After all, the organization has done for the veterans, a member of the Legion should be proud to get out and work and enlist the buddy to come in. The strength in numbers, and if the American Legion is to be what it should in this country, it must have the support of all the men who are eligible for a place in its ranks."

Under the new rule, it will cost a man \$4 to join the Legion during February. This fee pays his dues for the year, entitles him to the privileges of the clubrooms and gives him the American Legion Weekly.

Congress at last is coming to the realization that public sentiment demands the passage of national aid legislation. It is highly probable that before the present session adjourns the long-delayed bonus bill will have been passed.

The bonus measure is not a "hold-up" attempt on the part of the American Legion and other organizations, but is intended to show the veterans the support of all the men who are good the promises made during the days of trouble when the war clouds were breaking and men were needed at the front.

It is not payment for the work of the veterans; it is a token of appreciation. Each man will go willingly into the battle lines for money. He will not risk his life and suffer the tortures of front-line experience for a few dollars. He will accept the redemption of broken pledges and show in the only possible way that it appreciates the work he so efficiently performed.

The veteran does not ask to be put in the class with the war profiteer, the high-salaried shipyard worker

and the "cost-plus" contractor; he asks only for simple justice.

It is declared the passage of the bonus law will seriously handicap the treasury department. If the war had lasted two months longer than it did that same treasury department would have been suffering a more serious condition than the payment of a bonus to veterans can possibly bring about.

It was the veterans who now demand the bonus who brought the war to a successful conclusion long before the time that had been expected. The nation during the war, but this track ran along political lines. A single-track purpose was in the mind of every man in France, and every man in the camps at home. The objective of that purpose was victory. It smashed down all barriers, overcame all obstacles, endured all hardships and achieved victory.

Congress has its ear to the ground. From the distance can be heard the rumblings of public sentiment. That sentiment demands that the bonus bill be passed by a decisive vote and congress will not fail.

National headquarters of the Disabled Veterans of the war has conducted an investigation regarding the so-called "Disabled Veterans' Relief societies" in Washington and has found the doors of the organization closed and the rent unpaid, according to Raymond A. Lanes, national adjutant.

The organization published a magazine, "The profits" of which were to be expended for the benefit of the disabled veterans. After making his investigation, Mr. Lanes has issued a statement in which he has warned the public against any solicitation for aid for the disabled veterans unless these solicitations are authorized.

The Disabled American Veterans are opposed to any and all public solicitations of support in the name of disabled soldiers when the proceeds are not entirely devoted to the aid of disabled soldiers," said Mr. Lanes. "We believe that the sale of publications and of subscriptions thereto, the holding of entertainments and benefits and the solicitation of funds from the public should be carefully scrutinized to make certain that the money so willingly given by the public is actually and entirely devoted to the purposes announced."

A star party and smoker is planned by the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the night of February 27. J. P. Field is chairman of the affair and is making arrangements for a programme of drill team. C. Clarence Likins, chairman of the good-of-the-order committee, has this in charge. The purpose of the organization is to have the team in shape so as to make a creditable appearance at the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Seattle in September.

Refreshments and smokes will be served following the meeting of Over-the-Top post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars which will be held tomorrow night in the clubhouse.

The American War Mothers are busily engaged making curtains and draperies to match rugs and furniture which will be donated to the public health service hospital as furnishings for the sun parlor on the second floor. The furniture consists of six easy chairs, six rockers, 12 footstools and two large oak library tables. Most of the furniture is made of imported grass. The money for the equipment was earned by the mothers at their Christmas bazaar. The committee in charge of arranging for the gift to the hospital is now looking for a place to hold the bazaar.

The job of warding off the prominent sympathy which comes from ex-soldiers in many Florida and the ice-bound coasts of New England for their "poor" comrades in Alaska has fallen to the historian of the Ketchikan, Alaska, post of the American Legion. A letter which he has sent out explains that the "origins" of life in Ketchikan are mythical, and that service men there are able to do a honest day's work without doing any snowing.

"Tell us about riding to work behind husky-dogs, tell us about the igloos and the gold-diggers and the sordidness," cry the "buddies" in letters from the states. And all the time the Ketchikan boys sit in their shirt sleeves, fanned by the warm Japanese current that swings in along the coast and gives Revillagigedo island a gentle, harmless climate.

"Please note following," writes the historian, with a vicious dab at his inkwell and a soft, inaudible damning of the persons who harbor an unbred, romantic conception of Alaska.

"1. There isn't a gold miner in the post.

"2. The thermometer has never dropped lower than five below.

"3. The deepest snow in recent years was three inches.

"4. Some winters pass with practically no snow.

"5. Overcoats are often a nuisance in January and February.

"6. Raincoats and umbrellas are commonly worn.

"7. No one has ever worn furs or snow-shoes to a post meeting.

"8. Gold fishing is the principal industry.

"9. No one reads by the northern lights or the midnight sun."

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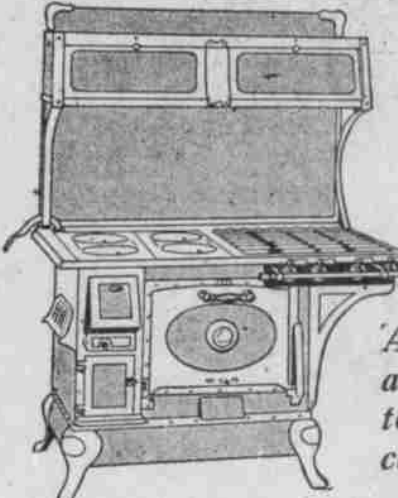
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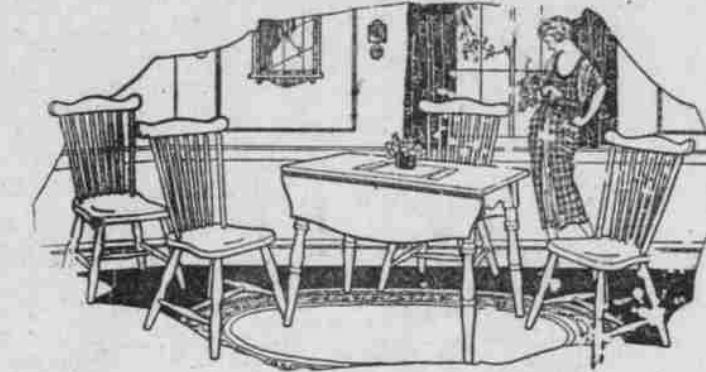
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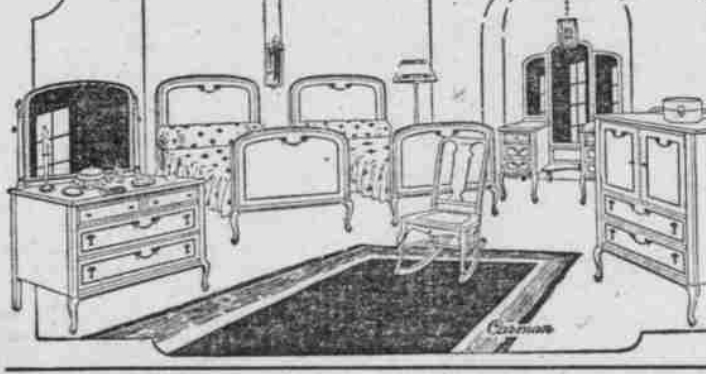
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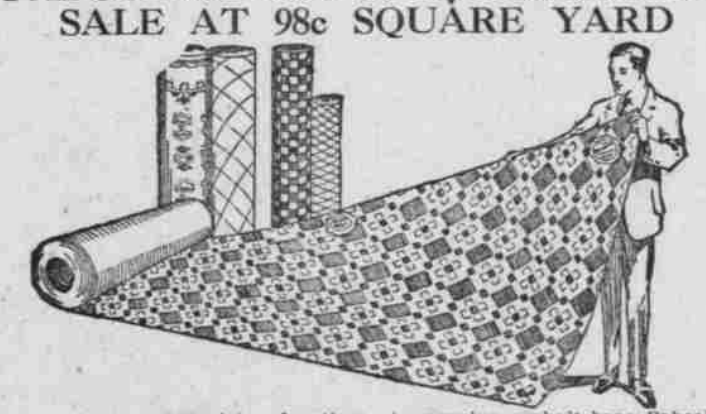
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