THE NATIONAL PUBLICITY DIVISION, NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, THE AMERICAN LEGION, INDIANAPOLIS

NATIONAL SPEAKERS' INFORMATION SERVICE

OCTOBER, 1929

The Eleventh Anniversary of Victory

THE GLADNESS that surged through this country just eleven years ago today will be long remembered. The signing of the World war Armistice was one of the most joyous events and one of the most welcome the American people have ever experienced. When the official word was given that the war was over, it was the signal for the spontaneous outburst of emotions pent up for months. Our days of anxiety were over. All of the tension of the war was released in one mad celebration that vibrated to the most distant corners of the land.

Many of you will recall today the happy crowds which thronged the streets on the first Armistice Day. The factories and industrial plants were deserted. Offices were closed for the day and the routine of everyday life was at a standstill while the people celebrated as they had never celebrated before. Patriotic fervor was at its highest pitch. Victory overseas had long been awaited and the people were giving full expression to their unbounded gratitude and happiness.

Some four million fighting men, the greatest force ever mobilized for the defense of this nation and its ideals, hailed the signing of the Armistice just as joyously as did the civilian population. The great objective had been reached. No longer would airplanes whirl overhead in mortal combat. The screech of bursting shells, the sharp staccato bark of machine guns belching missiles of death, would no longer be heard. The mud and rain of the trenches, the miles and miles of barbed wire entanglements, all of the hardships of war, were to become memories of their service.

On the sea our boys would no longer have to keep a ceaseless vigil for sight of the periscope of the dreaded U-boat. The great ships which had zig-zagged across the ocean for months, carrying our men to France, would no longer scurry over the sea like hunted animals. The boys would be brought back from France and then these ships would again resume their place in the peace-time commerce of nations. Our fighting men turned their thoughts away from war and its waste and desolation, to their homes and their loved ones and towards the new life which lay before them.

Although hardly apparent at once, the signing of the Armistice had a still deeper significance to our fighting men. The full realization of what it meant came later, days and weeks after hostilities had ceased on the Western front. The American soldiers soon realized they had duties and obligations ahead of them that the war did not end. The idea germinated slowly, gathering force and momentum as it spread through the A. E. F. Our men were to return to their native land with something more than the military triumph they had so gloriously achieved.

The fighting men of America had gained through their war service a high appreciation of the value of citizenship in this country. They felt that the same spirit of purpose, the same unity of action, the same lofty principles of freedom and democracy which had inspired them on to victory overseas, must be preserved and carried back into civilian life. Having served their country and served it well, they were imbued with still greater ideals of service. They felt it their duty to carry back a great message of patriotism, to teach greater love for America and for its cherished ideals and institutions. They were to continue to give to their country in time of peace the same unselfish service they had so freely given in time of national peril.

It was such thoughts as these inculcated in the minds and hearts of the American soldier that resulted in the organization of The American Legion. The great caucus of the A. E. F. held in Paris in 1919 at which the Legion was born, postponed the adoption of permanent policies until a more representative meeting of veterans could be held in this country, but it was definitely understood that the organization was to dedicate its efforts to the service of America in peace.

It is just eleven years ago today since our boys came out of the trenches and left the shell-torn battlefields of the World war for new fields of endeavor. Their noble purpose of giving further service to flag and country as civilians in peace time was scarcely more than a dream then but through The American Legion they soon found a practical way to "carry on." Today the Legion stands before the American public as the concrete embodiment of those dreams of service and the achievements of the veterans are written in the history of the Legion. The American Legion is now regarded as a powerful influence in American life, an influence that is constantly being wielded in the interests of a better citizenship and a better land.

It was only natural that the Legion should devote its first efforts of service in the behalf of the human wreckage of the war, those who were maimed and wounded and who will carry the scars of physical and mental sacrifice to their graves. No one can say that the Legion has been derelict in its duty to the disabled. The rehabilitation of the disabled has always been first on the Legion program and it will continue to be as long as there is a need for it. For more than ten years the Legion has fought for justice for those who still suffer from the wounds of war and it will continue the fight in the years to come.

What has The American Legion been able to accomplish for the disabled? Without the Legion to fight their battles, many disabled men would today be dependent upon relatives or upon charity. It is the Legion that has unwound the official red tape and opened the way for thousands of disabled men to obtain the government compensation to which they were justly entitled. Through the efforts of the Legion thousands of others have been placed in government hospitals where they could receive medical care and attention which would again make them self-supporting citizens. The Legion has fought for adequate hospital facilities for the disabled, demanding at all times that they be provided with the best in the power of a grateful government to bestow.

Our memory carries us back today to the most pitiful of all the human wreckage the war left in its wake, those who came back with nervous and mental disabilities. Comrades and citizens, do you realize that although eleven years have passed since the Armistice was signed, there is constantly an increase in the number of veterans suffering with mental disabilities? Many of our men left the service apparently in good health, not realizing that the strain they had undergone in battle, or the constitutional diseases they acquired, would later lead to mental breakdown. The number of those mentally disabled has been increasing at an alarming rate until now the government hospitals are filled and most of the state institutions are seriously crowded.

A few months ago The American Legion learned that more than 5,000 of these veterans suffering with mental illnesses were not being provided with the government medical care and attention that is provided for them by law. The Legion conducted a nation-wide survey to determine the exact conditions. Some were even incarcerated in jails while others were in institutions for the incurable insane where they had little or no opportunity for improvement.

As a result of this survey the Legion has launched a nation-wide campaign for an increase in government hospital facilities where the mentally ill can get proper medical treatment. Congress will be asked to appropriate sufficient funds for this purpose and Legionnaires throughout the country are urging their senators and representatives in Congress to act without delay. The Legion realizes the seriousness of the situation and it will leave nothing undone to insure the proper hospitalization of these comrades.

Besides its work for the disabled the Legion has done much for another class of war sufferers, the children of the men who were either killed in action or died as the result of their war service. A $5,000,000 endowment fund was raised in 1925, the income from which is used for service to and the aid and care of war orphans and the disabled. The Legion is now fostering a movement to provide these children with educational opportunities that would have been theirs had their fathers not made the supreme sacrifice. The Legion's educational program for the war orphans contemplates aid from the different states to supplement an allowance from the Federal government.

While the Legion has been engaged in the performance of those tasks so near the hearts of the men who served in the World war, it has also engaged in many other worthwhile activities. Throughout the nation the Legion is today carrying on a great community service program that has no parallel in history. The service of the Legion has been unrestricted, depending only upon what was needed for the betterment of the community. With the slogan, "In peace as in war we serve," more than 10,000 Legion posts have found ways to bring many new benefits to their re-

spective communities. In a single year more than 200 different kinds of community service projects have been reported by the thousands of posts to National Headquarters.

As the Legion has continued to grow in strength and power it has from year to year taken on new responsibilities. One of the most recent of these is its Junior Baseball program. This activity was started in the belief that it would afford a splendid avenue for the teaching of the principles of Americanism to the youth of the land. It has been an outstanding success, attracting in 1929 approximately 300,000 boys. The lessons in fair play and clean sportsmanship which these boys learned on the baseball diamonds, will go far towards making them good citizens in adult life.

The significance of the activity and its immensity is more readily apparent when it is realized that the 300,000 boys who took part in the 1929 program, established a direct contact with upwards of a million people connected with their families. The Legion has not only developed the fundamental traits of good American citizens in the boys who actually participated in the play, but it has brought the same lessons home to their brothers and sisters and to their parents. The boy who learns the fundamentals of good citizenship through the lessons of good sportsmanship is bound to be benefited and to have some influence on those immediately surrounding him.

An activity closely allied with the Junior Baseball program is the Legion's sponsorship of the Boy Scout movement. The Legion has given nation-wide support to the Boy Scouts for several years because it believes that this movement is an outstanding influence in the development of better American citizens. Hundreds of Legion posts are today sponsoring Scout troops, in many instances providing Legionnaires for Scout leadership. A special effort has been made by the Legion to reach the under-privileged boys or those who ordinarily have no opportunity to join troops affiliated with churches, schools or other established institutions.

Always interested in the industrial development of the nation, the Legion has given its whole-hearted support to the development of aviation. The first efforts along this line was a national campaign to identify towns and cities for air travel. Encouraged with the success of this venture, the acquisition of landing fields was placed first on the Legion's aviation program. Many posts purchased fields for their communities while others leased airport sites. In still other communities the Legion either conducted or aided in local campaigns to provide municipal bond issues to purchase landing fields. The Legion support has without doubt greatly advanced the cause of aviation.

The military training the men of the Legion were receiving eleven years ago has been turned into a useful peacetime service. Recognizing the peculiar fitness of men with military experience to give leadership and to act promptly and efficiently in time of danger, the Legion started the organization of post emergency relief units. Time and again these relief units have demonstrated their worth. When floods occur the Legion posts in the stricken area are the first to provide organized relief. In forest fires and cyclones, the Legion relief units have won high praise for their prompt response and the efficient service they gave in time of community danger.

Another outstanding service to the nation is being performed by the Legion through its national safety first campaign. More posts have taken part in this work than any other activity conducted on a nation-wide scale. Working in co-operation with the schools and other agencies, Legion posts all over the country have conducted all kinds of safety educational meetings. They have erected thousands of signs urging safety, worked for the elimination of traffic hazards and aided otherwise in the great movement for the conservation of human life.

It is such service as this that is building a glorious tradition for The American Legion. The men who a few short years ago were fighting with all their might to break the Hindenburg line have never felt that their military service ended their responsibilities to the nation. It brought, instead, a fuller realization of their duties and obligations as citizens. When the Armistice was signed at 11 o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1919, it only opened a new era of service for those who had so gallantly fought for the nation's honor.

Eleven years have passed since the men who now make up the ranks of The American Legion laid aside the weapons of warfare with the everlasting hope that they would never be called to take them up again. They had seen bloodshed at it worst. They had learned not to fear war but to abhor it. They had seen war stripped of all its glamour, leaving only the stark and cruel realities of mutilated bodies and untold suffering. So it was that they left the battlefields of France determined that this nation should never again engage in war if it was humanly possible to avoid it.

The American Legion wants peace but it insists upon the maintenance of a military strength sufficient to guarantee the security of the country from war until a better plan can be devised to prevent armed conflicts between the nations of the world. We must not be lulled into that false sense of security which found us so unprepared at the outbreak of the World war. The men who fought at Chateau-Thierry, the men who crossed the Marne under a withering shell fire, the men who went over the top in the Argonne, know the value of preparedness in terms of wealth and lives.

What happened in the last war is now a matter of history. America paid dearly for its lesson of unpreparedness and the country should now profit by the experience. You do not believe that any citizen should be permitted to make vast profits out of war. Neither does The American Legion. Yet in the last conflict some 23,000 new millionaires were created in this country. The American Legion believes that in the event of another emergency, it should produce neither slackers nor profiteers. That is why the Legion is now urging Congress to enact its Universal Service bill which would place all of the resources of the nation under government supervision should we be forced into war.

The Legion measure would take all of the profit out of war and at the same time provide equal service for all. Under this plan war could be prosecuted swiftly if it came, without a needless loss of life and property. At the same time it would be an insurance for peace because other nations would hesitate to engage in armed conflict a country prepared to defend itself on a business-like basis. With profit to none and equal service for all, no element of our population would ever encourage war.

Armistice Day will always remain as one of the brightest spots in American history. Very few of us would be able to tell when the treaty was signed which officially ended the war, yet any child of the age of understanding knows that November 11th commemorates the date when the guns ceased to roar. We must always regard it as a day for rejoicing, as a day of thanksgiving for our military triumphs of the World war. The American Legion is pleased to know that thirty-four states in the Union have made Armistice Day a legal holiday. It is to be hoped that other states will soon take similar action.

As we celebrate today the historic event which occurred eleven years ago, it is well that our thoughts should for a time dwell on the deep significance of Armistice Day. We should take counsel with ourselves and see if we have become peace-time slackers or whether we are carrying our full burden of the responsibility of citizenship. We should take this opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to the service of the nation and pledge anew our allegiance to the flag and the ideals for which it stands to the end that America may become a greater land in which to live and that mankind will benefit by our unselfish service.

GET PUBLICITY FOR YOUR SPEECH

Extracts from your speech printed in the local newspapers are needful if your message is to reach beyond the walls of the structure in which you speak. If you will follow the appended suggestions with regard to preparation of copy, distribution, etc., you will find the newspapers willing to give you valuable space.

1. Write your speech out in full. Whether you use the speakers' letter in toto, or use it as a basis for your own expressions, write out your speech. You do not necessarily have to follow it in full delivery. You can use the topics therein mentioned as you will, so long as you touch upon them.

2. Write the speech on a typewriter.

3. Make sufficient copies on onion-skin paper, so that all the local newspapers, morning and afternoon, and the press associations, may each have a copy. Double-space the speech.

4. Put at the top of the first page in the center some such heading as follows: "Speech of John Doe, past department commander of Calimexico, delivered at Kiwanis Club meeting (dedication or the like)."

5. If the speech is to be delivered in the morning or at such a time around noon as afternoon papers may have time to use it, slug the speech—at the top of the first page, in the left-hand corner: "For release in P. M. newspapers of (the date the speech is delivered)."

If the speech is late in the afternoon or in the evening, slug it: "For release in A. M. newspapers of (the morning following delivery of address)."

6. Mail or send a copy of the speech to the newspapers and press associations a few days in advance of the delivery. Have extra copies on the date of delivery if reporters ask for it.

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National Publicity Division.