

FOOD-CONTROL AND DEMOCRACY

BY DANIEL LUBIN

I

THE eyes of the statesman are beginning to be opened to the true significance of the war; he is beginning to see that it is a life-and-death struggle between autocracy and democracy. And the eyes of the strategist are opening to the significance of food as the important factor in the struggle, and with good reason, for the state of the war is that of a double siege carried on with the deliberate design of forcing capitulation through starvation. On the one hand, the blockade by the Entente has almost altogether isolated the Central Empires, shutting them off from the world's food-supplies; and on the other, the submarine warfare of the Central Empires aims at doing the same to the Entente Powers.

The greatness of the stake — the triumph of democracy — impels, inspires, and spurs on the Entente nations, until their vision has been focused on one point only — victory.

With this end in view, it is essential that the status of the world's food-supply be known. Fortunately, the official world crop-reports, the crop-reports given out by the International Institute of Agriculture, are here; and they supply this essential information; they afford, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the world's commissariat department.

And this information is important to the strategist, for it enables him to know what the supplies are and where they are. He is then prompted to take

measures for stimulating production and conserving supplies. Accordingly, we find that various measures have been taken toward this end in the several belligerent countries, such as meatless days, potatoless days, food-limitations for animals, requisitioning of crops, rationing, war-bread, bread-cards, meal-tickets, the utilization of broken foods and kitchen refuse, food restrictions and prohibitions, fines and imprisonment, *fiat* prices, the control of exports and imports, and the appointment of food-dictators.

But, above all, extraordinary steps are being taken for increasing production. Premiums are offered, prices guaranteed, vacant city lots, plazas, and untilled lands are being utilized, and strenuous efforts are being made to induce women, school-children, and the aged to work on the land, so as to increase the common stock, thus proving their patriotism, thus helping to win the day.

Thus we have stimulated production on the one hand, and rigorous conservation on the other. That these are essential is obvious, but do they cover the whole field, do they cover distribution? Unless they do, they can be shown to be inadequate for the ends in view.

To take up the case so far as the United States is concerned — having entered the war, it has to provide for two essentials: first, it must see that its own people are adequately supplied with food-products at fair prices; second, it is pledged to assist the Allies

with the food-supplies which they require. Now, what may be expected to happen in the case of stimulated production without adequate means of equitable distribution? What has happened heretofore? So far as the farmers are concerned, higher than normal earnings in some few districts, and lower than normal in the remainder; but, so far as the consumers are concerned, manipulated high prices in every district. For it is in the essence of unsound, unscientific distribution that it tends to land the crop in the keeping of the 'profiteer,' from the family food-hoarder right up to the powerful corporation, the trust, with its ramifications for monopolistic buying and selling throughout the country.

It is, therefore, quite clear that, if stimulated production is to act as the long bar of the lever, if rigorous conservation is to be its weight, we must also have the necessary fulcrum, equitable distribution, before the device can become economically operative.

And have we that fulcrum? Have we that system of economic distribution? If so, where is it? What is it? How does it work? What does it do?

But is not this rushing things? Who said that we had such a system? At this time we are just looking for it; it is with this end in view that proposals are being made for (a) fiat prices, (b) the control of exports and imports, and (c) the appointment of a food-dictator; all these being measures which have been adopted in other belligerent countries.

At first sight it would seem that it would be the most practicable mode of procedure for the newcomer in the field of war-legislation on food to follow the modes adopted in other countries; for country B to adopt the modes in operation in country A. But let us suppose that country A requires 10, of which it produces 2 and imports 8, whereas country B also requires 10, but pro-

duces 18 and exports 8; and it will be seen that the application of parallel methods is impossible. This, in fact, explains the difference between England, an importer of farm-products, and the United States an exporter of farm-products.

But let us examine the proposals. Let us take up the first — fiat prices. At what point will the fiat be made to act? Will it be on the farm? Will it be at the point of delivery? Will it be at the warehouse? Or will it be at the retail store? And then, what would become of the Bourse, of the Exchange, of the channels of commerce? How would the farmers sell at the time they need to sell? Or would the farmers have to hunt for the buyers at retail? Or would all the products, at fiat prices, be taken by the government? How then would the government store these products? How dispose of them? How even up the profits and loss? Thus we see that there are insurmountable difficulties in the way. Fiat prices may be all right in some communities, in some countries, sometimes. It is quite obvious that fiat prices would not be all right in the United States at any time. We therefore see that fiat prices would not be conducive to equitable distribution.

And now for the next proposal — the control of exports and imports; how would that affect distribution? The government could, of course, produce an artificial glut by withholding ships for the transport of the staples, and thus lower the home price to the farmer. But the dealer, having bought, would store and retain the product in the warehouse until famine should force it out, but at famine prices. The government would thus play into the hands of the 'profiteer,' the monopolist. We thus see that the control of exports and imports also fails as a means of securing equitable distribution.

And now, finally, we come to the last

item — the food-dictator. It has happened in some countries, on extraordinary occasions, that a dictator has been appointed to whom were granted extraordinary powers — powers which transcended the ordinary laws, customs, traditions, and modes of procedure. But would not the Federal Constitution and the autonomous powers of each of the several states prevent the effective exercise of such dictatorial powers in the control of buying and selling, in a democracy like the United States?

Let us, however, for the time being, waive these objections; let us suppose that such a dictator, vested with extraordinary powers for controlling the production and distribution of farm-products, has been appointed; what would be expected of him?

First, a maximum quantity of products; second, an even flow of the same; third, equitable distribution; fourth, just prices to the producers; and, fifth, just prices to the consumers.

Clearly it would be absurd to expect a food-dictator to do all this by merely issuing a proclamation. He would have to do much more than that, to accomplish the desired effect. But could he go far in his dictatorship without running counter to the Federal Constitution and to state autonomy? While the American people, as a result of their resentment of Prussian tactics of frightfulness, have thus far taken kindly to bond subscriptions and to universal military service, it behooves the government to foster this attitude by avoiding any procedure in the matter of food-control that is likely to weaken it. It is therefore of importance to exert endeavor in the direction of food-control in a manner which will carry with it the sympathetic assent of the American people.

'Well,' say some, 'the powers granted the food-dictator need not transcend federal or state law, or custom, tradi-

tion, or accepted modes of procedure. His functions are intended merely to permit him to specialize in the direction of a subdivision of labor in the field of food-production and distribution.'

But if we are looking for subdivision of labor, have we not now got it in a more effective form in the highly elaborate organization of the Department of Agriculture? Would it not be more reasonable to expect the results aimed at through the labors of the highly experienced, specialized bureaus of that Department, rather than through the experimental labors of a proposed food-dictator?

And now the question arises: is the Department of Agriculture in a position to do this work? Let us see.

Speaking on food-distribution in the *United States Price Current*, March 7, 1917, Mr. Houston, the Secretary of Agriculture, says: —

'A full and satisfactory explanation of prevailing prices is not possible on the basis of existing knowledge. . . . Where the food-supply is located, who owns it, what may be the difficulties of securing it, whether the local market conditions are due to car shortage, whether there is artificial manipulation or control, no one can state with certainty.'

It would thus seem that the Department of Agriculture is no more in a position to achieve equitable distribution of farm-products than a food-dictator would be. And there is a good reason for this. There is a broken link in the chain of effective means. That broken link is the absence of practical and psychic relationship between the Department of Agriculture and the vast number of units that go to make up the body of American farmers.

Clearly, before the Department could bring about equitable distribution, it would have to be in a position to obtain and impart information from the

individual farmers, from each unit primarily, and then from groups of these units. Now, how is it to obtain or impart this information? Evidently through its agents or through correspondence.

But would it be possible to reach each of the units through either of these means? Would it be possible to do so in time to obtain or impart current information for purposes of dynamic economic direction?

Let us see. Could it be done through agents? Even if armies of them were employed, their lack of broad commercial vision and the loss to the farmers of valuable time involved in such service would render it impracticable. Again, to reach the farmers of the country through correspondence, the Department would have to send out millions of letters of inquiry, and to send them out at short intervals and regularly. Assuming that these millions of inquiries would be answered, the answers would have to be assembled, collated, and compiled, and conclusions drawn from them weekly, or even more frequently, if they were to serve as a basis of current economic direction. All of which has not been done heretofore; and what competent authority would assert that it could be done now?

Nor is this the end of the difficulty, for here the psychic factor enters into the case. Such a service may be effective only when the units concerned are freely disposed to obtain and impart such information and to be guided by such direction. Now, apart from the fact that the farmer is proverbially 'busy,' apart from his disinclination to answer letters or to see agents, there is still another element that enters into the case, the element of caution. The farmer is asked a question by a government department; why should he answer? how should he answer? how will

the answer affect him? And there you are!

Thus we see that the information from the farmer to the Department and from the Department to the farmer must inevitably be heterogeneous as to time, nature, value, and significance, and could be had from only a relatively small number of scattered units, and must therefore be imperfect so far as current economic uses are concerned.

'But,' say some, 'could not this information be obtained and imparted through the agricultural associations, the granges, the farmers' unions, the farmers' institutes, and the like?'

It could not, for two reasons: first, those associations have not been formed on a plan which would permit of such service; second, as their activities are limited to their own membership, they would fail to reach the much larger body of farmers outside of their organizations. This would leave such numerous gaps in the reception and the imparting of the information as would render such service not merely ineffective but misleading and injurious. They would be as great a block in the way of correct information and direction as a defective cog-wheel in a watch would be in the way of correct time-keeping.

II

From the foregoing it would seem that we cannot have sound economic direction, equitable distribution, through the labors of the Department of Agriculture, nor through a food-dictator, nor through the present agricultural associations. Any attempt at current economic direction through one or all of these means would seem to be just as futile as it would be for a conductor to attempt to obtain harmony from a band in which each of the musicians insisted upon playing a different tune at the same time.

What then? Are we driven to the conclusion that there can be no system of current economic direction in the purchase and sale of farm-products — that there can be no system for their equitable distribution? By no means. There can be such a system. Central Europe offers an example of such a system. It has been operative there for years and has proved itself of high economic value. It overcomes with ease all the obstacles and difficulties which we have alluded to, and many more not here touched upon. It is simple and effective, and can be readily understood by any one of normal business experience.

This system has been adapted to American needs and embodied in a bill for a national chamber of agriculture, originally introduced by Senator Duncan U. Fletcher. It was revised and reintroduced in the last session of Congress by Senator Morris Sheppard, since when it has been again reintroduced in the present session and is now pending in Congress.¹

In substance, under this system the Federal government offers charters for the organization of chambers of agriculture. These chambers are of different grades. There are, first, the township chambers; second, the county chambers; third, the state chambers; and fourth and finally, the national chamber of agriculture.

Whenever a farmer in a township

¹ This measure was taken up in detail at a convention of the State Commissioners of Agriculture which met in Washington in May, 1916, for that purpose. The bill as amended by the Commissioners was submitted by them to the President at a conference on May 5. The President commented upon several of its leading points. These comments resulted in some important final amendments, when the bill was indorsed by the Commissioners. It was then reintroduced on May 12, 1916, but too late for passage that session. It has now been reintroduced, and should be acted upon during the present session of Congress. — THE AUTHOR.

obtains twenty names to a petition, he will be given a charter and can form a township chamber of agriculture.

Whenever four or more townships have been organized in a county, they can obtain a charter and elect their delegates, who form a county chamber of agriculture.

Whenever one third of the counties in a state have been organized, they can obtain a charter and elect their delegates, who form a state chamber of agriculture.

Whenever twenty states have been organized, they can obtain a charter and elect their delegates, who form the national chamber of agriculture.

We thus have an all-embracing, semi-official organization for promoting the equitable distribution of farm-products, supported by the annual dues paid by the members of the township chambers. It would have paid secretaries and a working staff in each of the several chambers, with ramifications beginning with the individual farmer linked up to his township organization, then to his county organization, then to his state organization, and lastly to the national organization; all of which is intended for the purpose of placing the distribution of farm-products on as practicable and economical a footing as is the present distribution of manufactures from the factory to the consumer through the ordinary channels of commerce.

And right here I would beg the indulgence of the reader in following the somewhat technical explanation of the usual method of business procedure in the distribution of merchandise from the factory to the consumer, which I will now give in the belief that it will afford the clearest insight into the intention of the proposal before us, and illustrate vividly the need for it.

The first step taken by a manufacturer of, say, woollens, or cottons, or

leather-goods, or hardware, toward getting out the season's goods, is to prepare his samples some months in advance. These samples are given their lot numbers, priced, and placed in the show-rooms of the concern, and duplicates of the same are handed over to its commercial travelers. The next step in the procedure is for merchants to place their orders, either direct from the samples in the show-rooms, or through the commercial travelers. Finally, the manufacturer proceeds to close his contracts for raw material and to book the orders for the factory.

We thus see that in all this mode of procedure the element of uncertainty and the need for guessing is reduced to a minimum.

Now let us proceed further with the goods when they reach the store. The head of the department marks them with the price, and hands them over to the stock-clerk in the department to which they are to go. The stock-clerk is then instructed as to when each item is to be entered for reordering.

And now we will take the procedure up from the other end — from the stock-clerk to the factory. When the stock-clerk sees that an item is down to the reordering limit, he enters it in his book; the head of the department goes over these entries and makes out his orders; these are submitted to the 'merchandise manager,' who reviews them, and before approving the order looks up the limit account of that department, after which he makes his comment. If all is satisfactory, the new order is signed and sent on to the manufacturer. And here again, in all this mode of procedure, the element of uncertainty, the need for guessing, is reduced to a minimum, and the business of distribution is conducted on a rational basis.

And what the system from the factory to the store and from the store to the factory does for the distribution of

merchandise, that the proposed organization of township, county, state, and national chambers of agriculture would do for the distribution of farm-products. The modes of procedure would, of course, be entirely different, but the results, so far as rational and economic distribution is concerned, would be the same.

Let us see how the proposed system would operate. Let us say that in a township organization in California some of the members take up the distribution of French prunes. Prices offered seem to them too low, so they ring up the secretary of the county chamber of agriculture, who is in communication with all the township chambers in the county. He informs them that no higher prices prevail in the county, and on instruction calls up the secretary of the state chamber, who is in communication with all the township and county chambers in the state. In the event that the prevailing state prices are deemed unsatisfactory, the case is then put in the hands of the secretary of the national chamber, who is in communication with all the state, county, and township chambers of agriculture in the Union, and with foreign markets as well. As a result of all this, the prunes find their way to the sections of the country where they are needed; too much does not go to one section and too little to another, but they are distributed, so far as possible, evenly in every section. It is evident that such a mode of distribution would bring a higher price to the producer and a lower price to the consumer than is possible under the present system of guess-work and uncertainty.

It is, in fact, the very system that a group of intelligent merchants would adopt were all the farm-products of the country intrusted to them for distribution. It is the very system that a trust would adopt if it had the sole control

of distributing a product, only that in the case of the trust its great capitalization would enable it to store the products until it could sell them at artificially enhanced prices.

'But,' some one will say, 'what would prevent the farmers from becoming the trust and from storing the products until they also could sell them at artificially enhanced prices?'

Two things would prevent this. First, the farmers could not adopt the storing tactics of the trust unless they were united in a corporation and had the capital; second, if they had the capital and were united in a corporation, and made a big profit on certain products, it would induce so many other farmers to grow the same product as to force the price back to a just level. The trust system, however, by keeping the price to the producer artificially low, does not encourage the cultivation of a larger area; and thus the trust can carry on these storing tactics for years, to the injury of the producer on the one hand, and of the consumer on the other.

And right here it is necessary to make clear the wide difference between the present governmental aids to distribution and the proposed system. The proposed chambers of agriculture are intended to serve business purposes by business means. It has been estimated that there are some forty thousand townships in the United States. Given an organization in each township employing its paid secretary and supplementary assistants as needed, using the card-index, the typewriter, the telephone, and the telegraph; with county, state, and national chambers similarly organized; and with power to provide and supervise street-markets, salesrooms, and exchanges; in constant communication during every business day of the year and every business hour of the day, throughout the system, from its broad base up to its apex,

and from its apex down to its base, from the township chambers to the national chamber, and from the national to the township, and we should soon see the difference between the present aids to distribution and the proposed system—the chambers of agriculture.

We should then see that the present governmental aids to distribution are to the farmer what learned discussions on the tariff law are to the practical labors of the custom-house. We should see that what the custom-house is to the tariff law, that the system of chambers of agriculture would be to the economic distribution of agricultural products.

And right here the information and labors of the Department of Agriculture, now largely static and ineffective for practical purposes, could, through the proposed organization, be put to dynamic uses, thus greatly enhancing their economic value.

The national chamber, while starting with an elementary staff of a secretary and a few clerks, would soon expand as its activities would warrant. In time its labors would be divided into departments—departments for the various products, for inquiry on sales, on purchases, on transportation, on claims; and when in full working order, its activities would rival those of the Dun and Bradstreet Mercantile Agencies.

III

But even if we grant all that has been claimed for the proposed system, the question still remains: of what utility would it be at this moment, right now, during the war?

I believe I am justified in saying that it would be of the highest utility, for it would mobilize the agricultural industry, rendering it as responsive to the national needs as an automobile is

to the least turn given to its steering-wheel. The agricultural industry thus organized would afford a mechanism through which the government authorities could find a practicable, economic mode of procedure in helping to guide distribution, and on equitable lines, which they could not otherwise have; for through the national chamber of agriculture and its subsidiary channels the government authorities could constantly be in touch with the supply and demand of food-stuffs in every township in the Union.

But could all this be put into operation right soon? Could it be put into working order so quickly as to serve the intended economic purpose during the war?

Yes, the bill provides for this; it could be put into operation within a very short time, perhaps within two or three months. By its provisions the President is empowered to start the ball rolling by appointing the members of a provisional national chamber of agriculture. This national chamber would then proceed to have the charters printed, and to draw up, in simple form, instructions, rules, and regulations for the state, county, and township chambers. These would show how a chamber may be formed, and the bounds within which it may frame its by-laws.

The charters, rules, and other printed matter would then be sent to the postmasters in each of the townships of the Union, with instructions that they study them, then hand them to the farmers and explain them. When the local postmaster or any farmer had obtained the signatures of the twenty farmers required to form a township chamber of agriculture, he would hand the signers the charter, whereupon they would proceed to pay in their dues and to organize.

As already described, the township

chambers would then proceed to elect the county chambers, the county the state, and, finally, the state chambers would elect the national chamber of agriculture. These elected members would then take the place of the members provisionally named by the President.

All of this, together with the wide publicity which the proposal would receive if put forward as a popular and necessary war measure, would presently leave but few townships in any state of the Union unrepresented.

That it would be justifiable to bring this proposal forward as a popular and necessary war measure is evident, for, as was shown in the beginning of this paper, the strategist keenly realizes that the equitable distribution of farm-products is a factor of primary importance in the world-struggle before us.

In an effort to meet the situation created by the war, advice has been given to the people to economize, to diminish purchases, to cease buying. The value of this advice seems to me questionable; it seems to be along the lines of the war policy followed in some of the belligerent countries. We all know that fewer purchases mean fewer sales, with the consequent discharge of employees and reduction in the number of employers. This is a result desired presumably for the purpose of rendering an abundance of the capital and labor thus released available for the government in carrying on the war. In other words, this policy means a deliberate overturning of the *status quo* in so far as it relates to capital and labor, in the hope that this overturning will lend itself to strengthening the hands of the government in the prosecution of the war.

While this may be a tenable policy in some of the countries which have adopted it, it is to be seriously questioned whether it would be a good policy in the United States; it is questionable

whether such a system would not give rise to general unrest, bankruptcy, panic, and ruin.

But whatever be the policy pursued as to buying and selling, there can be no question that in a great producing country like ours the first and foremost aim should be to bring about equitable distribution.

This is forcibly illustrated by the case of Russia, where, during the past year, as the result of a defective system of distribution, farm-products did not reach the market centres and there was consequently a great falling off in purchases; the people had almost ceased to buy. As a result, they were on the verge of starvation. Yet all this time there was a great surplus of food-stuffs on hand in the country, for they could not be exported. Yet in spite of this abundance the culpable lack of a sensible and equitable method of distribution soon produced its effects, bringing on an overwhelming revolution. And the first act of the revolution was to justify its advent by mitigating the evils due to that defective and unjust system.

Now, we are as much concerned in equitable distribution as is Russia; even more so, for we are assisting the Allies by large loans, mainly for the purchase of these farm-products, with the end in view of promoting a victorious outcome of the war. But would not the efficacy of our assistance be largely robbed of its merits if, as the result of a defective system of distribution, we were to permit the products to fall into the hands of the manipulators? Would not that mean that what is given to the Allies, on the one hand, would be unjustly absorbed by the manipulators on the other? And would not this jeopardize the outcome of the war?

It therefore follows that the passage of the proposed measure to establish the chambers of agriculture in order to

facilitate the equitable distribution of farm-products would lend itself to the effective carrying out of the work of the proposed food-control. It would supply the link now missing between all the individual farmers of the country and the proposed food-controller, thus supplementing and facilitating his efforts and rendering them effective. It should be adopted, —

First, because it would benefit the producers, and not only the producers, but the consumers; it would benefit all the American people;

Second, because it would enable the government and the Allies to procure their supplies at equitable prices, and thus help to win the war.

But, apart from the benefits its operation would confer on the American people; apart from the value which our chivalrous service would prove to have for our allies; apart from the victory in the war which its adoption would help to bring, ensuring us that 'place in the sun' to which we believe we are entitled; apart from these there is still another and a higher consideration. As the guy-ropes steady and support a tent, so these chambers of agriculture would support the Republic.

How? Let us see.

It is uniformly the case that democracies lend themselves to the rapid up-building of an influential and controlling middle-class, mainly the merchants of the cities who are masters in the art of buying and selling. This mastership carries with it the eventual destruction of the independent land-owning farmers, since their lack of knowledge of the true art of buying and selling renders them the under dogs in the economic struggle. As a result of all this, they are gradually transformed into renters, and the conservative men of the country become radicals, thereby weakening an essential element in the stability of the Republic. It follows that the

self-governing force of the democracy having been weakened, the Republic is made subject to a special controlling class. This vitiating process takes place by such imperceptible degrees that it becomes markedly manifest only when the democracy has, in reality, already ceased to exist. This was the cause of the decline and fall of the old Roman Republic, and it has been the cause of the decline and fall of all the democracies that have been.

That this deteriorating cause is at work in our midst will be quite evident to those who will give the matter the thoughtful consideration it deserves. With lands largely given away to the people as a free gift, or for a nominal consideration, the United States should have as large a number of land-owning farmers as Germany, or larger. Now, in Germany eighty-six per cent of the farms are worked by their owners, and fourteen per cent by renters. But our last census, in 1910, shows that but sixty-three per cent of the farms in this country are worked by their owners and thirty-seven per cent by renters; and the indications are that the census for 1920 will show a yet further reduction in the number of land-owning farmers, perhaps to fifty per cent, with a proportionate increase of renters.

We cannot refuse to heed the fact that the American Republic is still an experiment, that it is still a democracy on trial; for while in extent it is a giant, in the history of nations it is but as a little child, being less than a hundred and fifty years old. If the transmutation of the land-owning farmers of the

country into renters progresses in the future at the same rate as in the past,— an increase of eighteen per cent from 1900 to 1910,— for how many more years can we reckon ourselves a real democracy? And if we quiescently permit this deterioration to go on, does it become us boastfully to step forward as the promulgators of democracy for a whole world, and with plans for the confederation of democratic governments? Who are we that we should take the leadership in the guidance of democracies, when we supinely allow the decay of our own democracy? Is it not our first duty to cut away the canker which is eating into the vitals of our own nation,— the canker that has consumed all democracies in the past,— before we go forward to guide and strengthen other democracies?

And the way is open, the remedy is here. Let us adopt the system of equitable distribution of farm-products through the operation of the proposed chambers of agriculture. This system will be of the greatest assistance to us and our allies in the prosecution of the war; it is a system which has proved itself practicable; a system which has built up the economic strength of Central Europe; a system which will teach the farmer the true art of buying and selling to effective economic advantage; which will make him the peer of the merchant, the factor that he should be in the control of his own products; and we shall have in this system, in these chambers of agriculture, the guy-ropes which will steady and support the tent of the Republic.

THE RETURN

BY JEAN KENYON MACKENZIE

WHEN I returned to my poor house,
As well I knew I must,
The thatch was rotting in the rain,
The latch was stiff with rust,
And little forest creatures' feet
Had written in the dust.

Strange thing! In that poor house of mine —
Unlit this year or more —
Where I had dread to live alone,
There met me at the door
That unforgotten dream of mine
I used to dream before!

INDIVIDUALISM AFTER THE WAR

BY FABIAN FRANKLIN

'A FEW weeks ago, we were, or at any rate seemed to be, a nation of individualists. In this morning's papers, it is thought worthy of comment, but not of incredulity or even of surprise, that Congress is proposing to place all the necessities of the lives of a hundred millions of persons at the absolute discretion of the President.'

The phenomenon thus referred to in a private letter written early in May, by a keen and level-headed observer, must have similarly impressed the minds of

thousands of thoughtful Americans; and not a few must be asking themselves the question whether the non-chalance with which the far-reaching economic war measures of the time are being regarded by the nation is, as the writer suggests, a sign that 'we are definitely leaving a world to which we shall not soon return.' No question, except the paramount one, what we must do to win the war, can be of greater interest.

To discuss the question, and discuss