

# "What America Has Done in Half Year of War" Newspaper Article, October 5, 1917

What America Has Done in Half Year of War

Marvelous Record Made in Six Months by Nation Since April Six, Date of Declaration

Two Million Dollars Per Hour is Now Being Spent to Put Uncle Sam in Fighting Trim.

*[By Robert J. Bender, United Press Staff Correspondent.]*

WASHINGTON, Oct 5. — America, rounding out its first six months in the world war today, has made marvelous records. From a nation of peace and unpreparedness, the country in six months has developed into a powerful fighting machine — the greatest factor in the war. Congress, on the eve of Adjournment of its war session has completed a program, which, for magnitude and money, has no equal in the history of the world's parliaments.

On April 6 — the day President Wilson signed the declaration of war — the American army was small and unsupplied. The navy was not fully manned. The railroads, under equipped, were unable to move their vast freight shipments, much less to handle gigantic troop movements. America's merchant marine was a joke among nations. The army had less than a dozen aero planes. No laws existed for the development of an army and navy such as the emergency required, no money was at hand for the unprecedented expenditures necessitated and no authority rested for carrying out the war talk. Today, after six months, more than million men are under arms. Millions more are registered for service subject to call. Sixteen cantonment Camps — cities each capable of housing forty thousand men — have been built at a cost of \$150,000,000. Billions have been loaned the allies, (billions have been appropriated for equipping and supplying the soldiers land sailors. There are now three times as many vessels in the navy as six months ago. The enlisted strength of the navy has increased from 300 to 500 percent in personnel.

Twenty naval training camps have been established and aircraft and projectile factories are being built. The aeroplane construction program assures the presence of thousands of American aviators on European fronts soon.

The shipping board has contracted for 433 ships already. Seized vessels are rapidly being put into service. Plans have been completed for three steel fabricating plants, to cost \$30,000,000. An operating department has been created sufficient to run 1,200 to 1,500 ships. Responding to International appeals for speedy ship (construction on American ways, it is [planned to build approximately six million tons within the next eighteen months and thereafter at least six million tons a year.

The railroads are operating as one great system.

With ships and troops moving steadily from this side to France, the United States in the last six months also has saved the financial life of her allies in tremendous loans. Since April 6 she has advanced \$2,518,400,000. Great Britain received \$1,240,000,000; France, \$690,000,000; Russia, \$275,000,000; Italy, \$255,000,000; Belgium, \$55,400,000, and Serbia, \$3,000,000 — a total which amounts to loans at the rate of nearly \$14,000,000 a day.

This country today is spending approximately \$2,000,000 an hour in all war expenditures. To meet these vast expenditures congress has authorized by tax and bond measures the raising of \$20,000,000,000. The treasury department successfully floated a first Liberty loan of \$2,000,000,000 and has just launched the second for \$3,000,000,000.

While these great movements were going on, congress placed in the president's hands authority such as is not possessed by any king or potentate. April 25, eighteen days after war was declared, congress had passed and the president signed the \$7,000,000,000 bond bill. Simultaneously \$100,000,000 was placed in the president's power for emergency use. Early in May congress passed a bill permitting the allies to recruit their citizens in this country. May 12, the president signed a bill authorizing seizure of Teuton ships. The first big appropriation for the army — \$273,046,322 — was promptly passed by congress and signed by the president May 12.

On May 17, the selective service bill had become a law. June 5 ten million men between the ages of 21 and 31 registered for their country.

Meantime the bill to double the navy and marine corps personnel was passed and signed by the president. May 22. A war risk insurance bureau was created July 12. Early the same month, congress passed the war budget bill of \$3,390,946,381.

June 15 the drastic espionage bill, giving the government broad powers to handle spies, sedition spreaders and propagandists of all kinds was a law.

Answering a wide appeal for a great air service, congress responded with appropriations of \$739,000,000 for an aviation program and later provided a special board to direct the work. Threatened congestion in railroad transportation appeared as the next pressing problem and congress passed two measures — one increasing the Interstate commerce commission from seven to nine members and the other empowering the president to fix priority shipments.

A long fight ensued over establishment of a food controller, but the president has had way and on August 10 signed the food bill and named Herbert Hoover food administrator. At the same time he signed the food survey bill providing means for taking an invoice of America's food stocks. There followed a long list of enactments. The \$2,535,000,000 revenue bill, the \$8,000,000,000 urgent deficiency bill, the trading with the enemy measures, the soldiers and sailors insurance bill and other less important measures were passed, including a daylight savings bill. Today the people, "big business" and many neutrals are virtually on "rations" as a result of this country's determination to conserve rations. Herbert Hoover has the people voluntarily eating less and saving more. Leading business men are sacrificing their time and in many cases, huge profits, to help in their war work. The president said there shall be no blood profits and as a result fixed a price on wheat, coal, steel and copper and will add commodities later.

The American embargo, working in conjunction with the allies is curtailing to the minimum shipment of supplies to neutrals who might feed Germany.

And out of this six months preparedness there is seen the first indications of a gradually weakening Germany. When the full force of America's blows are felt on the Hohenzollern throne, the fall of the Kaiser is believed certain.