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**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**Honorable JAMES D. PHELAN**

**UNITED STATES SENATOR  
FROM CALIFORNIA**

**ON**

**"THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
AND THE WAR SITUATION"**

**AT**

**THE PALACE HOTEL  
SAN FRANCISCO**

**NOVEMBER 26, 1917**





## SPEECH

OF

### Honorable JAMES D. PHELAN

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Mr. President and my colleagues, and gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce:

It is very pleasant, one may as well confess, to come back to one's home city and find such an expression as has been given by your president, of approval of the work of your representatives. When engaged in the public business I take it that it is very like the work of a soldier in action. One feels the stimulus which comes from conflict. The chairman has said that your representatives have accomplished much for you. These things have not always been secured by the asking. You are in constant conflict with those who are either ill disposed or ignorant, and in the legislative body, as Mr. Kahn probably knows and his fellows in the House even better than I, you have to meet opposition and put it down. The soldier goes into the very jaws of death inspired not only by his cause, but by the very love of the fight, and so in Congress life has been made tolerable through all the changing seasons because our backers out here have always put us into the fight. That we have accomplished something we are glad to hear. Sometimes you do not know whether your name will be properly spelled in the reports. You do not know what rewards will come to you, if any; indeed if you care for such a thing. But after it is all over, as it is with the soldier, he finds some gratification in the word of approval or in the decoration pinned on his breast, an idle bauble though it be, because it signifies that those at home have been watching and have not been heedless of the effort.

Somebody has deprecated the banqueting of gentlemen who have returned from Congress, or from the field. The idea of a banquet in the time of war to some, who have probably given very little thought to the subject, is incongruous. We ought to be dolorous, we ought to be sad and put on sackcloth and ashes. On the contrary, I contend that we should endeavor to preserve normal conditions, and this is the desire of the Government. It is not only true of the United

States, on whose land no battle is being fought, but in the lands of our allies. It is sound policy as far as possible not to dislocate business or place a pall on the people, who should be full of spirit—the inspiration which comes from confidence in victory. Now, how shall we preserve normal conditions in California? The normal condition of California is hospitality! (Applause.) And thus I am sure that in times of stress like these, even as in the time of our local disaster, it is necessary to keep up a bold front and go to meet your fate in the presence of the enemy, with a smile upon your face! (Applause.)

A Senator representing a middle western State said to me one day, after an appropriation had been made: "Is there anything that California needs that she hasn't got?" "Well," I said, "to him who hath it shall be given." California has a glorious climate and for that reason she receives two cantonments while other States have received none. She has a great ocean on her coast and she receives contracts for building ships. She has great agricultural, horticultural and mineral interests. She receives an agricultural school maintained by the Government; she receives much important and necessary information from the great bureaus in Washington. She receives large contracts for her products, and so, "To him who hath it shall be given," and it is because California is great that your representatives shine by her reflected greatness! (Applause.)

Sometimes a Senator pays the compliment to a Representative of listening to his speech. I remember going into the House one day when the Representative from this district had the floor. He was just saying that the first law given by God to man was a prohibition law, and then he added that it was also the first law that was violated. I shall not far trespass upon the time of these gentlemen—members of Congress who are to follow me. I have been admonished that the first law of this association's banquets is that one shall not exceed one's time and yet again I have the authority of

the Representative for the violation of the law. (Laughter.)

I am in serious doubt seeing so many of our Representatives here—indeed, I didn't know so many were expected—to continue an address which might involve giving you some important information. Ordinarily an after dinner speech never contains any information. It is supposed to merely please and entertain and not to instruct. But the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco, notwithstanding the protestations of its president that in this time of national peril he only sees it a Nation, I am disposed to believe he sees the Nation through the eyes of the State. It is well to deal in concrete things. This State is so situated that whatever helps to uplift California, uplifts in just that proportion the Nation. One cannot cover the whole subject of the Nation and its interests in a short evening address. California has done her full part as one of the sisterhood of States. Her contribution to the Nation's needs is a matter of tremendous gratification to us who represent you at the capitol. And it is an incentive to greater effort to know that what is accomplished for you not only reflects more glory upon the State but upon the Nation as well. They are inseparable as they are indissoluble. We cannot treat them as two different entities and when we gave to the Food Administration Mr. Hoover, we had a pride which the others did not participate in—in knowing that he came from California—but he at once was nationalized. Every man should stand for the welfare of his own community. That makes the Nation as a whole so glorious. It is the sum of the units that makes the grand totals of success.

I was specially gratified to know that Mr. Hall of the Scott-Hall Works in Berkeley, was the man of all others selected to make the Liberty motor, the standard motor for aeroplanes which is supposed to meet the extraordinary military needs which have arisen in this war. We have also given Mr. Hall to the Nation.

When the other day the world was astounded at Haig's drive against that almost impregnable line set up by German efficiency, what glory did California expect to find in that stupendous event of the week's news? Mr. Benjamin Holt of Stockton invented the tractor that propelled those tanks against a mighty army. I have here

the testimony of the man who is responsible for the tank warfare given in a public interview in which he says very briefly—I am quoting now Colonel Swinton who is called the father of the tank warfare: "I don't mean that the Holt tractor is the tank by any means," stated Colonel Swinton in the Literary Digest of November 10th, "but without the Holt tractor there would probably have been no tanks." This establishment at Stockton supplied caterpillar tractors since the declaration of war to the Allied armies. The use of these tractors has not only made it possible to employ larger field guns and crushing barriers, but has been a great factor in saving life and money. It is indeed creditable and pleasant for us all to know that there is a man at Stockton, California, who invented the means which broke the Hindenberg line. (Applause.)

What is California doing to build the warships for Uncle Sam? I have the authority of the Secretary of the Navy to inform you that our yards are not idle.

The following shows the proud position we have attained as builders of a new navy:

The Union Iron Works, San Francisco, has contracts for 2 scout cruisers, 66 torpedo boat destroyers and 18 submarines, at a total estimated cost of approximately \$145,000,000. Of these, the scout cruisers will be proceeded with at present only if it is practicable to do so without delaying destroyers, submarines or merchant vessels.

At the U. S. Navy Yard, Mare Island, there are orders for the construction of 1 superdreadnought, the U. S. S. "California," 8 torpedo boat destroyers, and 15 submarine chasers, at a total estimated cost of \$30,000,000. Of these, work on the battleship will be subordinated to work on destroyers, submarine chasers and repairs to ships in commission. In addition to the above, this navy yard overhauled 3 ex-German merchant ships and prepared them to be placed in service.

At the works of the California Shipbuilding Company, Long Beach, California, 5 submarines are being constructed, of which two are just about to be delivered to the Government, and the other three will be launched within the next two months. \*This work involves expenditures of approximately \$2,500,000.

At the works of the Seattle Con-



struction and Drydock Company, Seattle, Washington, there are being constructed 3 scout cruisers and 1 destroyer, at a total estimated cost of approximately \$20,000,000. Of these, the destroyer is nearly ready to launch, but work on the 3 scout cruisers will be subordinated to work on merchant vessels for the Shipping Board, for which this company has numerous orders.

At the U. S. Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, there are under construction 1 submarine, 1 ammunition ship, and 25 submarine chasers, at a total estimated cost of approximately \$4,000,000. In addition to these, two ex-German vessels were overhauled and fitted for commission for the Shipping Board.

What you merchants are interested in more particularly in knowing at this time is the condition of our merchant shipping. Upon the Pacific shipping, as you know, is demoralized and we acquiesce in that condition because it is a necessary incident to the war, and the only reason why we should plead with Washington, as we have pled, and shall plead again, is that our shipping will bring to this land from the islands its sugar and from far off lands the copra used in ammunition making, and burlap to be used in sacking our State products necessary for the feeding of our troops; and while the Government is commandeering, as it has commandeered to a great extent our shipping, we ask not that normal conditions be restored in whole or in part as soon as possible. To supply transports we give up our business on the ocean as one of our negative contributions to the war. The Hawaiian sugar shall be brought here now by sailing vessels. That is because sailing vessels are of little value at this time on the Atlantic. We must sacrifice our shipping for the moment, but the Government is building ships all the time, and, when Mr. McAdoo a few years ago proposed \$50,000,000 for the construction of merchant ships he was laughed at and the Senate filibustered and defeated his plans, and now he is justified. We are appropriating hundreds of millions of dollars to the Shipping Board for the Emergency Fleet Corporation for the construction of ships both of wood and steel. Merchant tonnage under construction in the State of California, for account of the United States Shipping Board

Emergency Fleet Corporation is as follows:

Steel vessels for which contracts have already been closed—Number, 73; approximate total tonnage, 700,000; approximate total cost, \$105,000,000.

Steel vessels, contracts for which are now under negotiation with probability of being closed—Number, 21; approximate total tonnage, 150,000; approximate total cost, \$30,000,000.

Wood vessels for which contracts have already been closed—Number, 12; approximate total tonnage, 50,000; approximate total cost, \$6,000,000. Grand total, steel and wood—number, 106; approximate total tonnage, 900,000; approximate total cost, \$141,000,000.

The total number of vessels, both steel and wood, and the tonnage and cost thereof, which will be under construction on the entire Pacific Coast during the next six months, for account of the United States Shipping Board, Emergency Fleet Corporation, is approximately as follows: Number, 300; total tonnage, 2,000,000; total cost, \$300,000,000.

This shows very clearly the immense value of construction which is going on in the United States when California and the Pacific Coast of which you are now informed has such a large share. Of course the Eastern yards are all busy and getting ready for this campaign and then for business which will be resumed after the war.

They are waiting for us on the other side, both for men, supplies and ships, hence the importance that this work be not delayed. The appeal has been made, and successfully made, to the men controlling the yards and the men who actually do the work, to speed up and to allow no selfish considerations to interfere at the present time with the great purpose of the nation to mobilize these vast resources. The other allied countries have been battling for three years unaided and unassisted by the great democracy whose fate depends on the issue of the war. I only regret that we didn't get in earlier. (Applause.)

We have made a very enviable industrial record. It means much in the education of our men in the construction of ships, which, on account of the losses of shipping and on account of the necessities of the future, will become, and will continue to be for



indefinite time, perhaps, our great industry. California has had seasonal employment in the past and now—that is, has provided for the workers employment through the summer months and had to lay them off in the winter. The advantage of manufacturing enterprises is that it gives employment throughout the year in a land whose even climate gives high efficiency. The smokestacks are something of which we should be proud and are a new glory to California. The wreaths which issue from their tops crown enterprise and labor. There can be no defilement of our California sky by smoke which brings prosperity and attendant happiness to our people and greatly serves our country in arms.

I would like to go into the whole subject of the war and what it means for this reason, and this reason only, that there are a great many people so influenced by their family traditions or racial extraction that they cannot bring themselves to a full realization of the import of this struggle. It is not a conflict, as I see it, between one nation and another. I recently had a conversation with a gentleman who, I am convinced, is utterly patriotic and yet he was not prepared to say that we were wholly justified in going into the war, and he was disposed to think that we were drawn into the war by some mysterious influence. He was disposed to think that we were serving Great Britain, who was in a tight place from which she had to be extracted, and in his mind he saw the conflict only between Great Britain and Germany, and therefore secretly resented our taking sides. To my mind there is no question that the war in its inception and in its conduct means but one thing and that is the survival of the free and independent nations of the world and the civilization for which they stand as against one nation seeking universal dominancy. (Applause.) It interested me very much to read a statement by Admiral Dewey. This is taken from Naval M. No. 33, volume 52, page 578, filed with the Navy Department and just recently published. Admiral von Goetz when he was military observer for Germany during our war with Spain said to Admiral Dewey—there had been some friction, and words were spoken in anger, as you know, “many a true word is spoken in jest” and many in anger—“Fifteen years from now my country will start

their great war. She will be in Paris in about two months after the commencement of hostilities. That move on Paris will be but a step to the real object—the crushing of England. Some months after we finish our work in Europe we will take New York and probably Washington and hold them for some time. We will put your country into its place with reference to Germany. We do not propose to take any of your territory, but we do intend to take a billion or so of your dollars from New York and other places. The Monroe Doctrine will be taken charge of by us. We will then have to put you in your place and we will take charge of South America as far as we wish to. Don't forget this. In about fifteen years you can remember it and it will interest you.” This is Dewey's report of their conversation.

I know that might be regarded as idle conversation if it were not verified by the facts. I was in England and I was amazed at the panic with which people were stricken at the time when there was no sign of war about ten years ago. At that time Lord Roberts scented grave danger. An American Admiral said to me: “England would be justified in going into the German harbors and destroying every warship under construction, because there was no doubt in the minds of military men that Germany intended to destroy England.” So when we are told that Germany is conducting a war in self defense in view of the facts it seems perfectly evident that Germany ever since 1870 has on the contrary pursued one idea in all her aggressive acts and that is world conquest.

France and England were marked first to yield. We have evidence of that in writings of her great publicists, including Nietzsche, von Bernhardt and others. I have read them. They are used in the German schools as text books and the youth of Germany are brought up upon that idea—that the strong must conquer the weak; that the weak have no rights; that the German people have nothing in common with other nations; that German culture will have to be assimilated by other nations until the world is Prussianized. On top of that they created a splendid army organization and a great navy too, and when they thought the time opportune, in August, 1914, they simply struck pursuing exactly the policy laid down by their rulers,

their publicists and by the captain in his conversation with Dewey—to take Paris and then London and put America under the heel and destroy the Monroe Doctrine. The fate of opulent New York and San Francisco might be judged by what happened to Lille, a stricken and impoverished city, when sixty millions of dollars were recently exacted on pain of destruction. So our turn would have been next if it had not been for the battle of the Marne and the great sacrifice by our French brothers in arms. Remember that it is to France that we are sending our men to re-enforce their troops! (Applause.) Our turn would have been next. There was a weak spot in Italy and an attack was launched there. There is many a weak spot on the American coast. Did not Zimmermann, the foreign minister, offer the States of New Mexico, Arizona and Texas to the so-called Republic of Mexico in consideration for their co-operation, requesting them at the same time to interest Japan and Japan would also receive its reward, perhaps Hawaii and California, and that was done before the severance of relations. The ravishment of Belgium is familiar to all and the fate of small nations without the ability to resist this unscrupulous Moloch of war would be the same. Every instinct of self-preservation, therefore, on the part of the United States commanded us to take a stand at this time. If we had not, and Germany at a later date attempted to conquer us, we would have received no support from Italy, France or England, because, as a craven people, we had in their time of need turned our backs upon them in fancied security. Should that have been their fortune in vain would we have appealed. But under the direction of our great President and leader we saw our duty and we are doing our duty—we are raising a splendid army; in every quarter of this land come the young men from farm, field and shop and countinghouse eager to take their part, thinking nothing of the cost, but in their heart of hearts believing that if they stand together they are irresistible, as they are irresistible. They will, united, stand as victors in the presence of the insulting foe. (Applause.) The boys go to the front cheerfully, therefore we should not withhold, but must get behind them, not only in their work but in their play. Do not begrudge contribu-

tions for the one or the other, which you are called upon to make, which is unimportant compared with the sacrifice they may be called upon to make. I do know that it is a glorious thing and they believe that it is glorious to serve in such a cause.

And yet it is a mistake to believe that the young men who go to the front with spirit and daring are without compensation. They are called upon to serve in a cause which involves the happiness of mankind. No sordid motive actuates them; but if they covet glory may they deserve it. Death is the common fate of all, sooner or later, and is it not better to die in a noble cause gloriously than to eke an existence in a dull and selfish pursuit?

"Since all must life resign,  
The sweet delights which decorate  
the brave  
'Tis folly to decline,  
And steal inglorious to the silent  
grave."

I saw the European people—apparently happy and contented—in France, in Germany, in Italy, during an extensive tour I made by automobile in the year before the war. They were enjoying the security of a world at peace. About the doors of humble cottages strewn throughout these lands, little children laughed and loving mothers crooned. The old and young seemed to express everywhere the joy of life. Now those homes have been destroyed or desecrated; the men, the women, the children, maimed or killed and everywhere privation, disease, ruin, desolation and death!

It has been said that it is cruel to take life, but that to take away the joy of life is a crueller thing to do, because a man without hope, in poverty and suffering, brokenly lives on.

This is the picture of Europe now. A sympathetic woman in my hearing said she found in these lines of a fugitive poem a justification of the war. Listen. Chivalrously a youth enters upon a crusade to restore to the broken world its ideals and loving offices:

My love was sweet to me. I told my  
love  
"For love of love and lovers to come  
after  
"I'll leave my love to make again  
"A world of love and laughter."

So let us cheer the boys on their way. Forget, my friends, your Senator and Congressmen, to whom you do much honor tonight. They are behind the ramparts. There is no personal peril in their work. We all love the

soldier because he is always ready, if needs be, to make the supreme sacrifice: He gives us his life!

A devoted father, whose son had gone to the front, has added another verse to the anthem "America." Let me in conclusion repeat the lines,

which will find, I am sure, patriotic response in every breast:

"God save our splendid men,  
Bring them safe home again,  
God save our men!  
Keep them victorious,  
Patient and chivalrous,  
They are so dear to us,  
God save our men."

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