

# T. R. TALKS AT PLATTSBURG

## If President Is Wrong, Citizens Should Show Him His Duty.

### IMPATIENT OF ELOQUENCE

#### Unless Supported by Action— Says Belgium and Lusitania Called for Deeds.

### SPEAKS TO THE RECRUITS

#### Criticises Failure to Strengthen Defense—Flays Pacifists and Hyphenated Germans.

*Special to The New York Times.*

PLATTSBURG, N. Y., Aug. 25.—Theodore Roosevelt, speaking tonight on the drill plain of the United States Military Instruction Camp, denounced the hyphenated American, the professional pacifist, the poltroon, the "college sissy," and the man with "a mean soul." Later he gave out for publication a statement in which he said Americans should stand by the President, but only so far as he was right, and spoke contemptuously of "elocution as a substitute for action."

Just before leaving the camp tonight Colonel Roosevelt dictated the following statement:

"I wish to make one comment on the statement so frequently made that we must stand by the President. I heartily subscribe to this on condition and only on condition that it is followed by the statement so long as the President stands by the country.

"It is defensible to state that we stand by the country, right or wrong; it is not defensible for any free man in a free republic to state that he will stand by any official right or wrong, or by any ex-official.

"Even as regards the country, while I believe that once war is on, every citizen should stand by the land, yet in any crisis which may or may not lead up to war, the prime duty of the citizen is, by criticism and advice, even against what he may know to be the majority opinion of his fellow citizens, to insist that the nation take the right course of action.

"There is even a stronger reason for demanding of every loyal citizen that after the President has been given ample time to act rightly and has either not acted at all or has acted wrongly, that he shall be made to feel that the citizens whom he has been elected to serve, demand that he be loyal to the honor and to the interests of the land.

"The President has the right to have said of him nothing but what is true; he should have sufficient time to make his policy clear; but as regards supporting him in all public policy, and above all in international policy, the right of any President is only to demand public support because he does well; because he serves the public well, and not merely because he is President.

"President differ, just like other folks. No man could effectively stand by President Lincoln unless he had stood against President Buchanan. If, after the firing on Sumter, President Lincoln had in a public speech announced that the believers in the Union were too proud to fight, and if instead of action there had been three months of admirable elocutionary correspondence with Jefferson Davis, by midsummer the friends of the Union would have followed Horace Greeley's advice, to let the erring sisters go in peace—for peace at that date was put above righteousness by some mistaken souls, just as it is at the present day.

"The man who believes in peace at any price or in substituting all inclusive arbitration treaties for an army and navy should instantly move to China. If he stays here, then more manly people will have to defend him, and he is not worth defending. Let him get out of the country as quickly as possible. To treat elocution as a substitute for action, to rely upon high sounding words unbacked by deeds, is proof of a mind that dwells only in the realm of shadow and of sham."

#### Speech to Men Who Prepare.

Colonel Roosevelt's speech was delivered before the officers and men of the regular army on duty at the camp, the 1,400 bankers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and others who make up the Business Men's Regiment, and 2,000 civilians—a crowd of more than 5,000 persons all told. The speech was loudly cheered.

The speech came at the end of a busy day for the Colonel. After he had seen all there was to see within the tented city he raced off to the drill plain of Plattsburg Barracks and watched the Second Battalion of the Business Men work out a problem. Then he went over to the south in an automobile to see the finish of a combat problem in which the First Battalion had the leading part. He ate "camp chow" for luncheon, and later watched the cavalry, engineers, and field artillery at their work. Returning to Plattsburg Barracks, he saw the entire regiment pass in review. Then he returned to camp for an old-time army supper, and later delivered his speech.

The speech was set for 6:45 P. M., and on the minute the Colonel began. Before him, forming a huge crescent, the

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# ROOSEVELT WOULD BACK PRESIDENT ONLY IF RIGHT

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soldiers of the regular army and the men of the civilian regiment were grouped. Behind them were the 2,000 civilians.

It was getting dark when Colonel Roosevelt, escorted by General Wood and other officers of the regular establishment, arrived on the drill plain. He wore a tan riding suit, military leather leggings, and a cream fedora hat. His youngest daughter, the wife of Private Derby of Company B, ran out of the crowd and said something to her father as he took his place, the most central one in the crescent. While she was talking General Wood advanced and faced the crowd, and as is always the case when General Wood faces the men of this camp there was generous applause.

"Officers and men of the training camp, Colonel Roosevelt."

That was the speech of General Wood in introducing the Colonel. A cheer arose and the Colonel smiled.

Mr. Roosevelt prefaced the reading of his prepared speech with a tribute to the officers and men of the regular army, to whose efforts the men of the civilian regiment owe the training they are receiving. The Colonel pictured the regular as the highest type of American, a man who hates war, but "something else a great deal more." He derided those who picture the regular as a man who loves war. It would be just as nonsensical, said the Colonel, to picture physicians as men who want all the people to break their legs.

## Our Military Needs.

Colonel Roosevelt's speech follows in full:

"I wish to congratulate all who have been at this Plattsburg camp and at the similar camps throughout the country upon the opportunity they have had to minister to their own self-respect by fitting themselves to serve the country if the need should arise. You have done your duty. In doing it you have added to your value as citizens. You have the right to hold your heads higher because you are fulfilling the prime duty of freemen.

"No man is fit to be free unless he is not merely willing but eager to fit himself to fight for his freedom, and no man can fight for his freedom unless he is trained to act in conjunction with his fellows. The worst of all feelings to arouse in others is the feeling of contempt. Those men have mean souls who desire that this nation shall not be fit to defend its own rights and that its sons shall not possess a high and resolute temper. But even men of stout heart need to remember that when the hour for action has struck no courage will avail unless there has been thorough training, thorough preparation in advance.

"The greatest need for this country is a first-class navy. Next, we need a thoroughly trained regular or professional army of 200,000 men if we have universal military service, and of at least half a million men if we do not have such universal military service.

"At present, a single army corps from Germany or Japan (which is subtracted from the efficient fighting forces of either would not even be felt) could at any time be ferried across the ocean and take New York or San Francisco and destroy them or hold them to ransom with absolute impunity, and the United States at present would be helpless to do more than blame some scapegoat for what was really the fault of our people as a whole in failing to prepare in advance against the day of disaster.

"But the professional navy and the professional army are not enough. Free citizens should be able to do their own fighting. The professional pacifist is as much out of place in a democracy as is the politician himself, and he is no better citizen than the politician. Probably no body of citizens in the United States during the last five years have wrought so efficiently for national decadence and international degradation as the professional pacifists, the peace-at-any-price men, who have tried to teach our people that silly all-inclusive arbitration treaties and the utterance of fatuous platitudes at peace congresses are substitutes for adequate military preparedness.

## Seek to Chinify America.

"These people are seeking to Chinify this country. A high Japanese military officer recently remarked to a gentleman of my acquaintance that the future dominion over the seas and lands of the Pacific lay with Japan, because China was asleep and America was falling asleep, and in this world the future lay with the nations of patriotic and soldierly spirit. If the United States were to follow the lead of the professional pacifists and to permit itself to be Chinified, this observer's opinion would be quite correct.

"It is an abhorrent thing to make a wanton or an unjust war. It is an abhorrent thing to trespass on the rights of the weak. But it is an utterly contemptible thing to be unable and unwilling to fight for one's own rights in the first place, and then, if possessed of sufficient loftiness of soul, to fight for the rights of the weak who are wronged. The greatest service that has ever been rendered mankind has been rendered by the men who have not shrunk from righteous war in order to bring about righteous peace, by soldier-statesmen of the type of Washington, by statesmen of the type of Abraham Lincoln, whose work was done by soldiers. The men of the Revolution and the men of the civil war, and the women who raised these men to be soldiers are the men and women to whom we owe a deathless debt of gratitude.

"This means that all our young men should be trained so that at need they can fight. Under the conditions of modern warfare it is the wildest nonsense to talk of men springing to arms in mass unless they have been taught how to act and how to use the arms to which they spring.

"For thirteen months America has played an ignoble part among the nations. We have tamely submitted to seeing the weak, whom we had covenanted to protect, wronged. We have seen our own men, women and children murdered on the high seas, without action on our part. We have treated elocation as a substitute for action. During this time our Government has not taken the smallest step in the way of preparedness to defend our own rights. Yet these thirteen months have made evident the lamentable fact that force is more dominant now in the affairs of the world than ever before; that the most powerful of modern military nations is utterly brutal and ruthless in its disregard of international morality, and that righteousness divorced from force is utterly futile. Reliance upon high-sounding words unbacked by deeds is proof of a mind that dwells only in the realm of shadow and of sham.

## No Thanks to Government.

"This camp has lasted two months. It has done immense good to you who have been able to come here—although,

by the way, you must not think that it has more than marked the beginning of training you to your duties. But you have been able to come because you are either yourself fairly well-to-do or else because you happen to serve employers who are both public-spirited and fairly well-to-do, and who give you holidays with pay.

The Government has not paid a dollar for this camp. Inasmuch as we as a nation have done nothing whatever for national defense during the last thirteen months, the time when during all our history it was most necessary to prepare for self-defense, it is well that private individuals should have tried, however insufficiently, to provide some kind of substitute for proper governmental action. The army officers and enlisted men have put all good Americans under a fresh debt by what they have done in connection with this camp; and we owe much to the private citizens who have advanced the money without which the camp could not have been held.

"But you men have had to buy your own uniforms; you have had to spend money in fifty different ways; in other words, you have had to pay for the privilege of learning how to serve your country. This means that for every one man like yourselves who can afford to come here there are a hundred equally good American citizens, equally patriotic, who would like to come and are unable to. It is undemocratic that the young farmer, that the young hired man on a farm, that the hardworking clerk or mechanic or day laborer, all of whom wish to serve the country as much as you do and are as much entitled to the benefit of this camp as you are, should be unable to attend such a camp. They cannot attend to it unless the nation does as Switzerland has done and gives the opportunity for every generous and right-thinking American to learn by, say, six months' actual service in one year or two years how to do his duty, to the country if the need arises—and the Americans who are not right-thinking should be made to serve anyhow, for a democracy has full right to the service of its citizens.

"Such service would be an immense benefit to the man industrially. It would not only help the nation, but it would help each individual who undergoes the training. Switzerland has universal military service; and it is the most democratic and least militaristic of countries, and a much more orderly and less homicidal country than our own.

"Camps like this are schools of civic virtue, as well as of military efficiency. They should be universal and obligatory for all our young men. Every man worth his salt will wish to come to them.

## Peace-at-Any-Price People.

"As for the professional pacifists and the politicians and college sissies who organize peace-at-any-price societies, and the mere money-getters and mere money-spenders, they should be made to understand that they have got to render whatever service the country demands. They must be made to submit to training in doing their duty. Then if, in the event of war, they prove unfit to fight, at any rate they can be made to dig trenches and kitchen sinks, or do whatever else a detachment of indulgence in professional pacifism has left them fit to do. Both the professional pacifist and the professional hyphenated American need to be taught that it is not for them to decide the conditions under which they will fight. They will fight whoever the Nation decides to fight, and whenever the Nation deems a war necessary.

"Camps like this are the best possible antidotes to hyphenated Americanism. The worst thing that could befall this country would be to have the American nation become a tangle of jangling nationalities, a knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, and French-Americans. If divided in such fashion, we shall most certainly fall. We can stand as a nation only if we are genuinely united.

"The events of the past year have shown us that in any crisis the hyphenated American is an active force against America, an active force for wrongdoing. The effort to hoist two flags on the same flagpole always means that one flag is hoisted underneath, and the hyphenated American invariably hoists the flag of the United States underneath. We must all be Americans and nothing else. You in this camp include men of every creed and every national origin—Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, men of English and Irish, German and French, Slavonic and Latin, and Scandinavian descent. But you are all Americans, and nothing else. You have only one nationality. You acknowledge but one country. You are loyal to only one flag.

"There exists no finer body of American citizens in this country than those citizens of German birth or descent who are in good faith Americans and nothing else. We could create an entire national administration, from the President down to the last Cabinet officer, every one of whose members would be of German blood and some of them of German birth, but all of them Americans and nothing else, all of them Americans of such a type that the men who feel as I do could heartily and without reserve support them in all our international relations. But the Americans of German blood who are of this type are not hyphenated Americans. They are just plain Americans like the rest of us.

## Perilously Near to Treason.

"The professional German-American has shown himself within the last twelve months to be an enemy to this country as well as to humanity. The recent exposures of the way in which these German-Americans have worked together with the emissaries of the German Government—often by direct corruption—against the integrity of American institutions and against America doing its international duty should arouse scornful indignation in every American worth calling such. The leaders among the professional German-Americans have preached and practiced what comes perilously near to treason against the United States.

"Under the Hague Convention it was our bounden duty to take whatever action was necessary to prevent and, if not to prevent, then to undo, the hideous wrong that was done to Belgium. We have shirked this duty. We have shown a spirit so abject that Germany has deemed it safe to kill our women and children on the high seas. As for the export of munitions of war, it would be a base abandonment of morality to refuse to make these shipments. Such a refusal is proposed only to favor the nation that sank the Lusitania and the Arabic and committed the crime against Belgium, the greatest international crime committed since the close of the Napoleonic contests a century ago. It is not a lofty thing, on the contrary it is an evil thing, to practice, a timid and selfish neutrality between right and wrong. It is wrong for an individual. It is still more wrong for a nation. But it is worse in the name of neutrality to favor the nation that has done evil.

"As regards the export of munitions of war, the morality of the act depends upon the use to which the munitions are to be put. It was wrong to subjugate Belgium. It is wrong to keep her in subjugation. It is an utterly contemptible thing not to help in every possible way to undo this wrong. The manufacturers of cannon, rifles, cartridges, automobiles, or saddlery who refuse to ship them for use by the armies that are striving to re-

store Belgium to its own people should be put on a roll of dishonor.

"Exactly the same morality should obtain internationally that obtains nationally. It is right for a private firm to furnish arms to the policeman who puts down the thug, the burglar, the white slaver and the blackhand. It is wrong to furnish the blackhand, the burglar and the white slaver with weapons to be used against the policeman. The analogy holds true in international life.

## Munitions for Belligerents.

"Germany has herself been the greatest manufacturer of munitions of war to be supplied to belligerents. She supplied munitions to England to subjugate the Boers and to the Turk to keep the Christians in subjection. Let us furnish munitions to the men who, showing courage which we have not shown, wish to rescue Belgium from subjection and spoliation and degradation. And let us encourage munition makers, so that we may be able to hold our own when the hour of peril comes to us in our turn, as assuredly it will come if we show ourselves too 'neutral' to speak a word on behalf of the weak who are wronged and too slothful and lazy to prepare to defend ourselves against wrong. Most assuredly it will come to us if we succeed in persuading great military nations that we are too proud to fight, that we are not prepared to undertake defensive war for our own vital interest and national honor.

"Therefore, friends, let us shape our conduct as a nation in accordance with the highest rules of international morality. Let us treat others justly and keep the engagements we have made, such as those in The Hague Conventions, to secure just treatment for others. But let us remember that we shall be wholly unable to render service to others and wholly unable to fulfill the prime law of national being, the law of self-preservation, unless we are thoroughly prepared to hold our own. Let us show that a free democracy can defend itself successfully against any organized and aggressive military despotism. To do so we must prepare as a nation; and the men of this camp and the men responsible for starting this camp have shown our Government and our people the path along which we should tread."

## Numerous Interpolations.

The Colonel made many interpolations in his prepared speech. He had hardly more than began than Captain Van Horn's big wire-haired dog raced into the crescent and lay flat on his back in front of the speaker.

"Well, he's neutral, anyway," snapped the Colonel, as he contemplated the ludicrous picture before him.

When Colonel Roosevelt, referring to the fate of Belgium, declared solemnly that there was no difference in the violation of morals, international or private, the crowd clapped its approval.

"I do not want applause from any man," said Colonel Roosevelt, lifting his hand for silence, "unless he has a burning sense of shame when he thinks of the fact that the United States has not stood up for Belgium, and now, thirteen months after the war started, the average Regular Regiment is one thousand men short of the strength it should have in war."

Colonel Roosevelt said he read a few days ago of the activities in a certain German-American labor organization. The members of this union would not fight for us if we should go to war, according to the report read by the Colonel.

"If I have my way," he said, "and we do have to fight, they will either fight for us or they will be shot by us."

"The surest way to invite disaster," said Colonel Roosevelt, "is to be rich, aggressive, and unarmed."

Colonel Roosevelt arrived in Plattsburg at 6:50 o'clock this morning. He was met by General Wood and Captain Halstead Dorey, the camp commander, and with them drove to the camp, where he breakfasted. He was here to see everything in one day, and the task was measurably accomplished. He saw the First Battalion, under Captain Van

Horn, drive the enemy helter skelter into the Saranac River; then he hurried to the north, and was in time to witness the finish of the "battle of the Peru Road." There the fight ended with a bayonet charge. "Bully!" cried the Colonel.

In the afternoon the ex-President received a visit from a dozen Canadian officers who are training near Montreal for service in Europe. For an hour he talked with them.

The recruits paraded for the first time as a regiment this afternoon. Colonel Roosevelt witnessed the parade, but did not review the command. He led the applause as the eight companies in company column swept by Captain Dorey.

"I have never seen a more inspiring sight," said Colonel Roosevelt.