

The AMERICAN LEGION Weekly

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THE EDITORIAL P.C.

New Fire Under the Melting Pot

REDUCED to a phrase the undertaking of The American Legion in its Americanization work is that of putting new fire under the melting pot. Preliminary organization of the tremendous effort which the Legion will put forth in this direction during the year was accomplished at Indianapolis lately when representatives of all states and departments met for that purpose. It was determined that as soon as the effort can be properly assembled and coordinated every local post and Legion member in America will be brought into play to the end that the great national melting pot shall begin to bubble and function as it should function.

The Legion's objective is to eliminate half baked citizenship. Education in Americanism and training in the duties of citizenship will be the weapons used. While in the pre-war days it had been noted academically that the melting pot was not fusing hundreds of thousands of immigrants, the weakening influence upon America of this fact was not brought home until the war. The fact that the majority of foreigners yielded quickly to the environment of a country of equal rights, that thousands of our finest citizens traced their birth to foreign soil, obscured the menace of the minority who did not yield.

Why was one immigrant a loyal citizen in the crisis and why was another one disloyal? Why are tens of thousands of foreigners in ignorance of the privileges and obligations of American citizenship? Why are thousands actually hostile in spirit towards the country and its institutions? Circumstances of their existence since their arrival in America doubtless provide the answer. Where they are isolated in groups, left entirely to their own devices and not brought into contact with the life of the country, there is little opportunity for the melting pot to reach them. In so far as the country has not reached them with educational cooperation and assistance, it would appear to be responsible for their unyielding state of mind. In so far as they have not been brought to see and know the advantages of this country over any within the history of mankind they have not been wholly responsible for not adopting it.

So, in its determination to have an America for Americans, in its determination to cast out those who persist in being enemies of America, the country must discriminate between ignorance and inherent viciousness. It must apply intensive education as an antidote against alien agitators and imported red propagandists. It must put more fire under the melting pot and see to it that the natural processes of assimilation are stimulated to the utmost. Then the ladle can be applied with a clear conscience and the waste matter that will not fuse thrown out, even as it is now being thrown out following the outbreaks of sedition and agitation that came with the war.

AT the same time there is Americanization work to be done among the country's finest citizenship to the end that the patriotic energy which whipped Germany be applied in full force to the problems of peace. The sense of duty that carried millions to magnificent personal sacrifice in preserving the country's ideals at the point of the bayonet must be applied in strengthening and perpetuating those ideals at the point of the ballot. If everyone who took an active part in some sort of war work would now apply a small part of that same energy to studying the problems of peace with the end in view of expressing his conclusions regularly at the polls, those problems would shortly be solved. When seventy five per cent or even fifty per cent of those obligated to vote at national and local elections fulfil that basic obligation, economic and political sores will vanish forthwith.

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