

[November 1943]

FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

It was in that grim and dark period of 1914. The dove of peace had flown. The Legions rolled and the deep-voiced guns intoned over the fields of Europe. A Canadian went to the front. His name was John McCrae. For four years he experienced the hideousness of war. He died in January 1918, ten months before the issue was finally resolved. Before death blacked out the stirrings of mind and the strivings of his soul, he set down upon crumpled paper a deathless message which the world now knows as Flanders Fields. Beautiful and brief, it goes in part

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

MONUMENTAL STRUGGLE

A soldier left that enriching message for posterity. He was a part of the greatest conflict in all history - greater, more horrible in some respects than the mechanized conflict of today. War is a swift moving enterprise today. A generation ago it was entrenched. On a (400) four hundred mile line across Europe nearly 250 divisions faced each other in the grim business of death - 1 every four miles. The shell shocked veterans of today bear mute testimony to the ferocity of that conflict. In the shambles of Verdun, there were more than 700,000 casualties. It was the price of a 3 mile advance. When stillness returned to the earth and the reckoning made, there were more than 37 million casualties. There were more than 8 million dead.

TIME ROLLS ON

Time rolls its ceaseless course. Twenty five years have gone by. There is healing in the years. The grass, like some mystic benediction covers the wounds of earth. When the guns were silenced, statesmen grappled with the problems which sprang from victory. The Senate of the United States labored with the question of entry into the League of Nations, membership in a World Court. It was a fruitless effort. The years went by and the ferment of conflict was at work.

BLACK-OUT

The lights went out again. Twenty years and nine months later, the blit began and 50 million men in all parts of the earth moved into uniform. It was the arbitrament of war. Again the eerie voices of millions could sing from patriot graves, "We are the dead, short days ago, we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved." But a seed of hope had been planted long ago. It lay in the hearts of those who served in the same conflict with the poet. They had come back to help direct the world. There are 168 of them in the House of Representatives. They are 39% of the membership. There are 35 of them in the Senate. Of the 531 members in both branches, 171 have sons and daughters in uniform. Fifteen hundred of their secretaries, clerks, and aids have also gone to war. It is a rather personal business now.

ACTION

Somehow the foolish business of killing must stop. Forty nine Republican governors, Senators, Congressman met on an island in the Great Lakes to agree on collaboration. By a vote of 360 to 29, the House of Representatives declared for the necessary machinery of statecraft as a move toward enduring peace in the future. On November 5, - just 6 days short of the 25th anniversary of the armistice - the Senate by a vote of 85 to 5, adopted a resolution, looking toward enduring peace thro collaboration. In the Senate are three who were there in 1919 and who opposed collaboration. On November 5, 1943, they voted for the resolution. They are Senators McNary of Oregon and Capper of Kansas, both Republicans, and Senator Walsh of Massachusetts, a Democrat. What an epic footnote to history. Peace will yet have an opportunity to endure.