

2138 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
January 14, 1943

Dear Lyndon:

I am very sad at the moment. Sitting with three Texans and an outside observer who sees you every day, the following was said and concurred with by the jury:

1. "Lyndon has constellation constipation." (Laughter long continued.)

Said two: "Doctor, is it a case of intellectual myopia?" (Interruption from three, "He is just swimming, waiting to see where things are".) and said four:

"There is a chance for salvage here but we have not got time as there is no real significance even if you salvage."

Consensus: 4 to 0 that the floater will float out on the tide without the benefit of Listerine for the Lister, as a Representative for the tired liberals, frightened and as the Boll Weevil once so clearly put it, one of those "who have no home in the cold."

Come and see me if you feel like talking.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Marsh

Congressman Lyndon Johnson,
New House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

2136 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
January 26, 1943

Dear Lyndon:

There is only one thing wrong about yours of January twenty-eighth. You address it to The Honorable Charles. This is merely an oversight of your secretary, but should be corrected.

It was nice to hear your voice over the phone to New York. I shall be back in town next Tuesday.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Marsh

Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson,
New House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

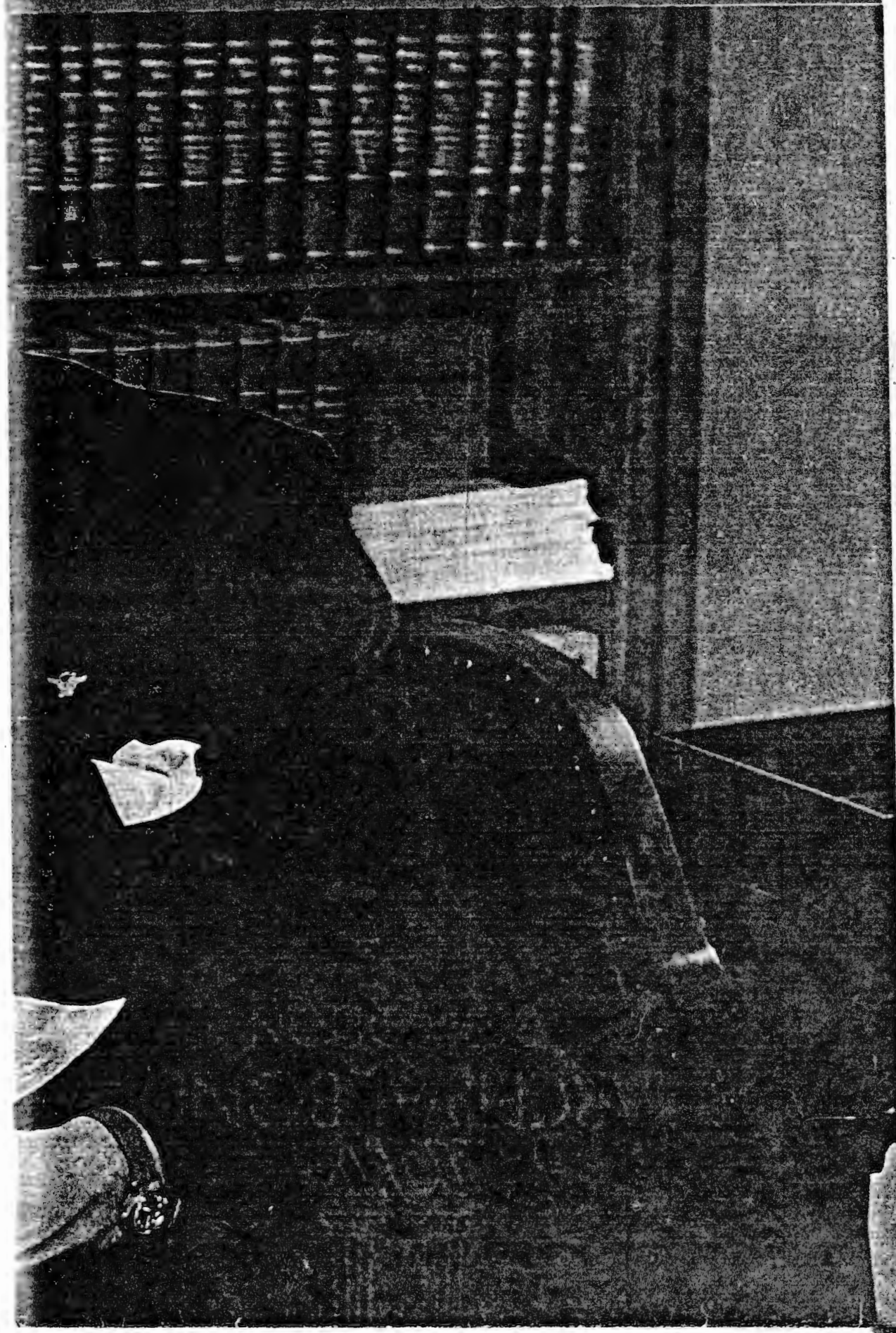
EVERYBODY'S WEEKLY

APRIL
SECT



1943
OF

The Philadelphia Inquirer



Representative Lyndon B. Johnson in his office

We Must Make Uncondi

By Lyndon B. Johnson

Representative of the Tenth Congressional District

A GHOST convoy haunts the sea lanes supplying our fighting men at the battlefront. It is the December Fleet of 42 Liberty Ships which never were built. A phantom squadron mocks the heavens in which brave men fight and sometimes die. It is composed of the 77 medium bombers which never got beyond blueprint stage in one week in January.

Those ships were sunk before they left the ways; those bombers were shot down before they ever left the ground. Absenteeism did it—the absenteeism of workers in the United States—a cancerous growth on our industry which has become Axis Weapon Number One.

For the man-hours lost because of absenteeism in United States shipyards in December were sufficient to build those 42 Liberty Ships. Those lost man-hours were more deadly to our cause than Axis subs, for the announced total of United Nations shipping losses to the U-boats in December was 31 vessels. Or, those lost man-hours were enough to build two aircraft carriers. The enemy has not destroyed one of our aircraft carriers since last October. Or, they were enough to build four light cruisers, or 20 destroyers, or 38 destroyer escorts, or 27 submarines, or 93 submarine chasers!

The same goes for our aircraft industry. Man-hours lost because of absenteeism in

one week in January were enough to build those 77 medium bombers. If this record is allowed to continue throughout this year, we will lose the man-hour equivalent of 2860 four-engine medium bombers, or 2860 four-engine bombers, without requiring the enemy to drop a shot or bomb a single airfield. Unfortunately, this alarming condition extends throughout our war industry—and grows steadily worse.

A BSENTEEISM is the cheapest and the deadliest, that ever has been placed at our enemies' disposal against us. Into the very heart of this huge effort for the life-and-death struggle which we are waging, it is cutting deeper, deeper. For military supremacy goes to the victor, and our citizens have become disturbed. There is a process of corrosion at work, undermining our war effort, eating into it like cancer. Those who are entrusted with the leadership of our fighting forces seem to be becoming more and more ineffectual and helpless as they reveal themselves showing more and more lack of initiative. It is because they are filled with business to do on the battlefield and on the high seas, and this is stabbing them in the back.

In time of peace, absenteeism is the failure of the worker to show up for his job when he's due. Today, it is the collaboration of that missing

Lyndon B. Johnson in his office at Washington.

Inquirer Natural Color Photograph by Larry P. Keighley

Unconditional Sacrifices

Lyndon B. Johnson

of the Tenth Congressional District, Texas

in January were enough to build medium bombers. If this rate is allowed to continue throughout this year, we have the man-hour equivalent of 4004 bombers, or 2860 four-motored bombers without requiring the enemy to fire a single bomb at a single airfield. Unfortunately, the condition extends throughout our industry—and grows steadily.

ABSENTEEISM is the cheapest weapon, the deadliest, that ever has been at our enemies' disposal against us. At every heart of this huge effort of ours, in this life-and-death struggle which we call our war, it is cutting deeper, deeper, as the demand for military supremacy goes on. Our morale has become disturbed. They sense a corrosion at work, undermining the effort, eating into it like damp-rot. If men are entrusted with the command, fighting forces seem to become despondent and helpless as they review the fighting. More and more lag in our war effort is because they are fighting men, men who are not doing on the battlefield, in the air, on the high seas, and this new weapon is robbing them in the back. In time of peace, absenteeism simply is the failure of the worker to show up on the job when he's due. Today, absenteeism is the collaboration of that missing worker with

the enemies of the United States. Whether he is forced into that collaboration by circumstances beyond his own control, or whether he does so as a matter of choice, the effect is the same. I can see no other way to define it.

We fear most those diseases for which we know no cure. Strikes once were running high fever in our defense plants. That was before the war. War was a tonic that reduced that fever. But for this new epidemic, absenteeism, which took a death toll in December of 20 destroyers for every one that we lost to the strikes, we have not yet sought the remedy. Our economic and industrial authorities have not put the germ under the microscope. And the deadly toll, in ships, in planes, in tanks, goes up and up.

FOR the latest period on which figures are available—the month of December—our Naval and Maritime shipbuilding program alone showed an absenteeism of 23,250,000 man-hours. The rate of absenteeism in 81 shipyards was eight percent. A job absence of three percent is considered normal for peacetime.

Strikes in all war industries for the entire year 1942 resulted in the loss of 16,765,000 man-hours. Thus we find that 6,500,000 more man-hours were lost in one industry—shipbuilding—in one month through absenteeism.

(Continued on Page Six)



Lyndon B. Johnson in uniform he wore on active service as a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy.

By Lyndon B. Johnson

(Continued From Page One)
ism than were lost in one whole year in all war industry through strikes.

Those 6,500,000 man - hours would have built five destroyers.

This, then, is the measure of that process of corrosion which is eating into our war effort.

Lives will be saved if we attack the contagion of absenteeism the sure way. Let us discover the cause. Unless we do that, we shall have to depend on sheer luck for a remedy; and we cannot afford to be unlucky. We know that nine and one-third out of every ten of our war workers show up regularly on the job. What makes that other two-thirds of a worker fail? Is it "Monday morning sickness?" Too much good time over the weekend? Is it unwise management? Is it illness?

I SAY quite frankly that I do not know, and until I find out facts, I am not ready to advance opinions. And I say further that I am not ready to accept the opinions of anyone else—management, labor or Government—until they are backed up by facts. We hear all sorts of suggestions and orations from sources bankrupt of fact.

The cure always is drastic, but it is the other fellow who always has the disease.

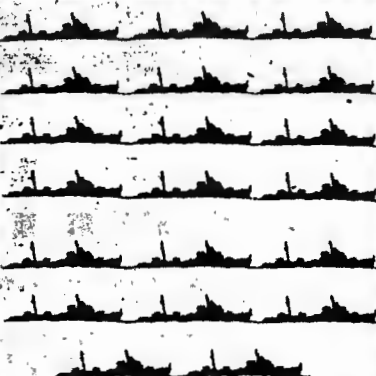
When we know what causes absenteeism, we shall know how to treat it. When we know that a

In the shipbuilding program, 23,250,000 hours were lost in the month of December

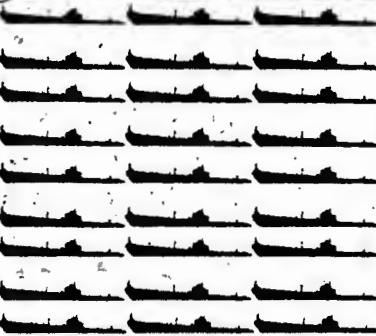
2 AIRCRAFT CARRIERS



or 20 DESTROYERS



or 27 SUBMARINES

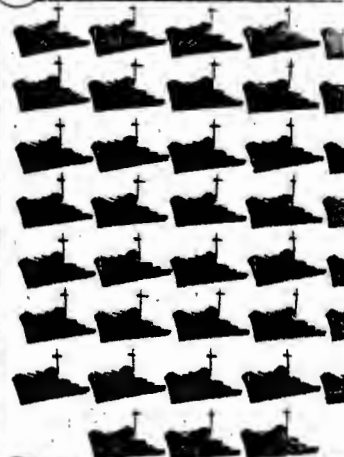


ABSENTEEISM

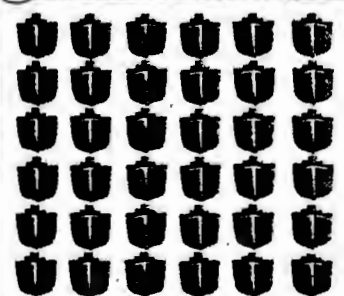
or 4 LIGHT CRUISERS



or 38 DESTROYER ESCORTS



or 42 LIBERTY SHIPS



(Which Would Have Carried 334,000 Tons of Guns, Tanks and Planes to the Fighting Front)

ing denied that privilege, it should be restored to him, even, if need be, by ending his deferment from Selective Service.

WITH the purpose in mind of determining the cause of absenteeism, in each individual case, man by man, and thus enabling the Nation to decide for each man the way in which he shall serve best, I have introduced legislation in Congress requiring all war plants and certain Federal agencies to report absentees to the Department of Labor.

On these reports will be listed the worker's name, age, address and employee classification, showing the type of work he does. The report will show to what extent the employee has been absent from his job without authorization. And it also will contain the employee's own explanation of why he was absent. In the case of a man between 18 and 38 years of age, such a report would be forwarded to his local board when his deferment

We Must

minority of loafers who just won't do a good job in the war plant. It is also a means of deterring unjustified absenteeism.

FOR women and older men, the process will be somewhat different. Suppose a woman says she was absent from work because of poor transportation facilities to the plant. The Department of Labor can refer such a case to the Office of Defense Transportation and a solution of the transportation difficulty can be sought. Suppose the absentee reports from a certain plant or area indicate widespread illness. Public health au-

...between the ages of 18 and 38 is unable or unwilling to do what his country asks of him on the ship ways, the aircraft factories or the munitions plants, we have the means of giving him an opportunity for higher service on the battlefield.

To help win this war, in the way that each of us can give our best, is the rightful privilege of every American. If, for whatever cause, any worker in our war plants is be-

...and 35 years of age, such a report would be forwarded to his local draft board when his deferment or continued deferment is asked. On the Selective Service board—composed of men in his home town who know local conditions—will then fall the task of deciding whether the employee is entitled to continued deferment from military service, because of the nature of the work in which he is engaged. This, it seems to me, is the way to screen out that small

HE KNOWS BOTH SIDES

WHEN Congressman Lyndon Baines Johnson arises to speak on the subject of war-plant absenteeism, the House of Representatives listens with respect. For well do his colleagues know that he speaks as a man intimately acquainted not only with the problems and the viewpoints of the workers in our war plants, but also with the trials and sacrifices of the men at the fighting fronts whose lives depend upon those workers.

One of the younger members of Congress, Representative Johnson went on active duty as a Lieutenant Commander in the U. S. Naval Reserve on Dec. 8, 1941—the day after Pearl Harbor. His first assignment was to the shipyards and aircraft factories of the West Coast as a representative of the Navy.

Before long, his request for sea duty was granted. One foggy night, he sailed from San Francisco Bay with five fellow officers. Three of those six officers since have been buried at sea—Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan; Johnson's bunkmate, Lieutenant Commander Louis Leahardy, who was Admiral Callaghan's operations officer, and Lieutenant Jack Wintle, flag secretary—all of them killed when the bridge of the Cruiser San Francisco was wiped out by Japanese hits during the Battle of Savo Island last November.

COMMANDER JOHNSON aided in the establishment of U. S. Navy headquarters in New Zealand, which launched the campaign leading to the occupation of the Solomons. He was subsequently assigned to General MacArthur's staff in Australia, and detailed to the Army Air Force.

"There I saw men tearing obsolete guns out of planes and putting in heavier ones. I saw just what 'too little and too late' can mean," he recalls. "I thought about how those of us back home could have done just a little bit more."

Commander Johnson was sent to New Guinea. On June 9, 1942, he was in one of the medium bombers which set out to raid the big Jap bases at Lae and Salamaua. Twenty Jap Zero fighters pounced on the squadron. A plane occupied by Lieut. Colonel Francis Stevens, one of Johnson's friends, lost a motor in the attack.

"The last we saw of it was when it disintegrated in the water," Johnson remembers.

One of the two motors on Johnson's plane went out. The pilot put it into a sickening dive to evade the Zeros, and pulled out of the plunge just above the treetops, which formed an effective camouflage background for the green-painted plane. Somehow, the crew brought that plane limping back to the base.

"When I watched those boys fighting to keep that ship going," Johnson said the other day, "something was burned into me that I cannot forget. When those boys and the others like them come back, I don't want to see the bitterness in their faces, the disillusionment in their eyes, which would come from the knowledge that there was something I might have tried to do to help them and didn't do it. That is why I am doing all I can to cure absenteeism in our war plants—for boys like those."

HE WAS stricken with dengue fever in New Caledonia, and was taken off a boat unconscious in the Fijis and sent to a New Zealand hospital. On July 18, under a blanket order affecting all Congressmen in the services, he was returned to inactive duty.

Congressman Johnson was graduated from the Southwest Texas State Teachers College in 1930 and attended Georgetown Law School in 1935. He was elected to the 75th Congress in 1937 at a special election to fill a vacancy caused by the incumbent's death, winning over nine other candidates. He was re-elected in 1938 without opposition, re-elected in 1940 without opposition, and re-elected in 1942 without opposition.

war—our Selective Service system and skills to produce the tools and the utmost of their energy. patriotic Americans who are likely within the great body of loyal slacker, is found—hiding his idleness, an inexcusable absentee—those circumstances. And where steps must be taken to remove are beyond the worker's control. Where the circumstances, each individual case of unavailability, second, is, first, to discover the cause. Therefore, the purpose of the authorities can be called in to clean up the conditions causing this illness.

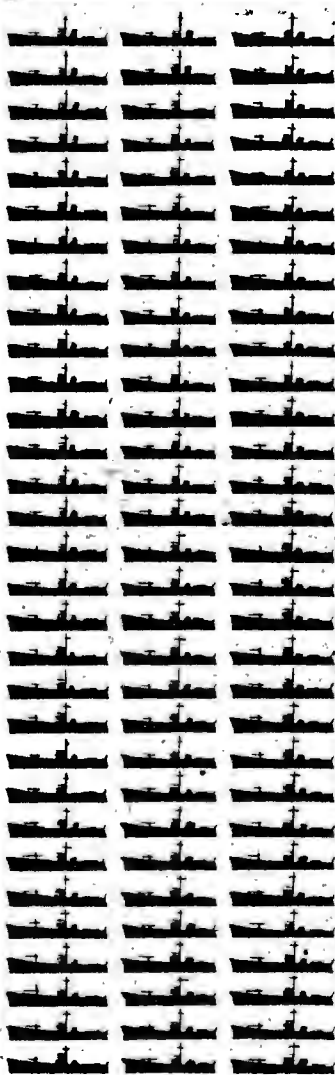
Make Up

OF 93 SUB CHASERS

The number of ships these lost man-hours would have built is shown in graph below

The number of ships these lost man-hours would have built is shown in graph below

or 93 SUB CHASERS



STRIKES

In December 957,000 man-hours were lost through industrial strikes. Here is what those hours would have produced in shipbuilding.

CARRIERS

1/11



or

LIGHT CRUISERS

1/6



or

DESTROYERS

1



or

DEST R ESCORTS

2



or

SUBMARINES

1 1/2



or

SUB CHASERS

4



or

LIBERTY SHIPS

2



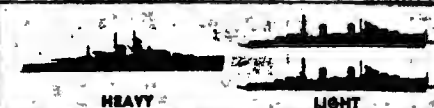
(Which Would Have Carried 16,000 Tons of Cargo)

VESSELS LOST IN ACTION

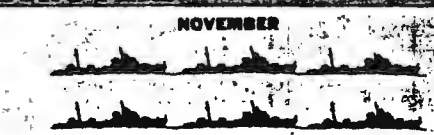
Reported last few months

1 AIRCRAFT CARRIER

3 CRUISERS

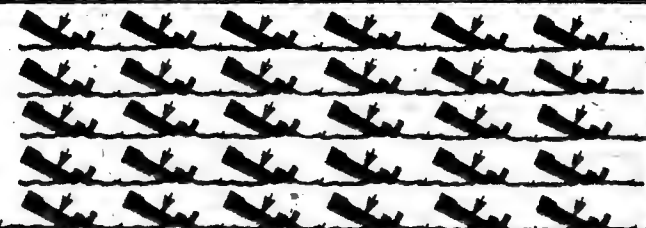


10 DESTROYERS



31 MERCHANT VESSELS SUNK

(United Nations losses reported in December)



Graph by James M. Garrett.

Make Unconditional Sacrifices

authorities can be called in to clean up the conditions causing this illness.

Therefore, the purpose of the bill is, first, to discover the cause of each individual case of unauthorized absenteeism, and, second, to cure it. Where the circumstances are beyond the worker's control, steps must be taken to remove those circumstances. And where a loafer, an inexcusable absentee, a slacker, is found—hiding his identity within the great body of loyal, patriotic Americans who are giving to the utmost of their energies and skills to produce the tools of war—our Selective Service system

has a very potent means of dealing with this type.

ONCE this is accomplished, the great majority of our war workers will be given the exoneration which they so thoroughly deserve. But to those who have made this exoneration necessary, we say, "The draft board will get you if you don't watch out."

We have a better record on absenteeism in this war than in the last war. I realize that many women workers, because of household obligations, may be forced to miss work on some occasions. There will be a lot of overwork

and, particularly among the older men, this will make them more likely to take time off. Furthermore, I know that the production job this country has done and is doing is a marvelous one.

But these are no reasons to be asleep. We cannot afford simply to pat our backs and let it go at that. For we have not done enough until we have been able to send too much, too soon, to too many places. For only then can victory be ours.

We have demanded of our enemies unconditional surrender—we must demand of ourselves unconditional sacrifices.

...that the draft board when this determination is asked.