

COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

STATE COUNCILS SECTION

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BULLETIN NO. 103

LIBERTY CHORUSES AND COMMUNITY SINGING

TO THE SEVERAL STATE COUNCILS OF DEFENSE:

Community singing for war purposes has passed beyond the stage of experiment. In Connecticut, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Maine, and other states community singing, under the direction of the State Council of Defense, usually through the formation of "Liberty Choruses", has proved itself of substantial value. It is an asset in any speaking campaign, assuring a large and enthusiastic attendance at meetings. It gives the people of the nation an opportunity to learn and sing the songs of the nation and its allies, thereby answering a long-felt need. It stirs the spirit of patriotism as hardly anything else can, and it promotes that unity of feeling without which no community can do successful war work.

We therefore recommend that in every state where this has not already been done, the State Council and the State Division of the Woman's Committee join in building up a state-wide organization of Liberty Choruses.

Specifically we propose:

1. That your State Council of Defense and the State Division of the Woman's Committee join in the appointment of a State Musical Director, to forward the work of organization, to direct the attention of the local choruses to the best music available, and to advise with them generally. Ability to lead choral singing, while not absolutely necessary, is useful to such a director, but a professional musician is not usually the best choice; organizing ability, initiative, and enthusiasm are the main requirements. The director should consult, however, with the leaders of existing musical organizations to secure their advice and support.

2. That every Town or Community Council of Defense be urged to organize a local chorus. Existing choral societies or choirs should be used as a nucleus wherever possible, but emphasis will need to be placed on the importance of making the chorus representative of the whole community rather than of any sect or group. A convenient plan of organization is for the chairman of the local Community Council to select a special committee on singing and for this committee then to select a local musical director and to call a first meeting of the chorus, which should be open to the public and well advertised through newspapers and dodgers. It is a good plan for the local director to secure in advance the help of a dozen or two men and women with good voices and to scatter them through the audience to assure the success of the first meeting. At this

meeting the chorus can be given permanent organization.

3. That choruses begin with the simplest songs sung in unison and not attempt too soon to divide into parts.

4. That the plan of state organization be so drawn that Local Councils can organize their choruses without waiting for a visit from the State Musical Director. Each chorus should, however, be registered at the office of the State Musical Director as soon as formed, and should receive from him a certificate of enrollment.

5. That the State Director act in the closest association with the speaking forces of the state so that every chorus can be of active assistance in speaking campaigns. If possible he should be given a desk in the office of the Speakers' Bureau.

6. That Community Choruses be encouraged to sing at all patriotic mass meetings, all Christmas celebrations, all national holiday festivities, and other public occasions of every sort, and that an effort be made to make them not merely perform by themselves, but always to lead the whole assembled audience. It is often well to scatter the chorus through the audience for this purpose.

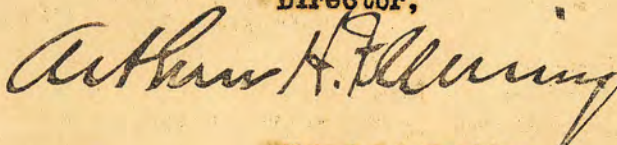
7. That the State Musical Director cooperate with the Four Minute Men, who have successfully led patriotic singing in the theaters in various states, and are now taking it up generally under directions from Washington. This work lies within the province of the Four Minute Men, who are the authorized governmental agency for patriotic education in the theaters. It is important that nothing be done to interfere with the activities of the Four Minute Men. We are confident they will be glad to have your co-operation, but any singing in theatres must be conducted entirely under their jurisdiction.

The Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense joins in making the above recommendations and is communicating them to its State Divisions. They have the endorsement also of the Speaking Division of the Committee on Public Information and of the Commission on Training Camp Activities, which has organized "Community Sings" in many cities and towns and is heartily in favor of spreading the movement throughout the country.

Very truly yours,



Director,



Chief of Section.