

Editor's Pages

Recording Indiana's Part in the War

Seldom has a generation lived in such stirring times as these. A World War, a world inflation, a world deflation, a world revolution, and now a second world war—these are the events witnessed by the generation born before 1914. We might have preferred quieter times, but the choice was not ours to make. Various roles are being assigned to each of us as the crisis reaches our individual spheres.

In the hurry of getting things done it is possible that the record may be forgotten. A prominent official offered a criticism recently, stating that when he was assigned a task similar to one performed by someone else in the first world war, he could not find a record of the experiences of the previous period to use in guiding his activities of today. It is always possible that the record may have practical values.

But the record should be preserved for later study by historians and other scholars. Publications and records of many kinds are being produced in great number these days and many are in danger of being lost. Many of our librarians and archivists are likely to be overcome by the magnitude of the task. Every library should endeavor to make a collection of the records of its locality. If it is the county-seat library, that locality is probably the county; if a library in a smaller town, it is the community itself. Libraries in some of the larger cities might endeavor to make collections covering larger areas. College and university libraries should pay particular attention to their own war efforts, denominational college libraries to their own church records. The State Library and the libraries of Purdue and Indiana University might well attempt a state-wide collection. There can hardly be any objection to any library doing as much as it is able, but a small collection adequately made will prove more useful than an incomplete collection of larger dimensions.

The cooperation of the public is also necessary. War letters, diaries, and other manuscript sources should be given or loaned to the libraries at least long enough to be copied. Publications of all kinds, particularly local publications, should be given to the libraries. If a local library does not

have room for files of local papers and periodicals, the larger libraries will no doubt take them for preservation.

The War History Commission at Indiana University will be pleased to receive all kinds of material revealing the effect of the war upon Indiana. If there is any doubt about the suitability of the material, a letter will bring a response setting forth the ideas of the historical profession.

Other states cannot be expected to perpetuate Indiana's participation in the war. The federal agencies have too much to do. Either it will be done in Indiana, or it will not be done. Indiana University and other institutions are ready to do their part.