

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The United States was officially neutral when World War I occurred in Europe between the Allies and Germany in 1914. Advocates of military preparedness pushed for American entry into the war on the side of the Allies, but it took until April 1917 when the United States declared war against Germany to achieve their goal. Until then, America's primary contribution consisted of supplying wheat to the Allies, whom were in need of grain. With the passage of the Selective Service Act in May 1917, preparedness advocates also achieved their goal of a military draft and creating an army for service in Europe. Many Americans, including Kansas Governor Arthur Capper, believed in a policy of non-intervention and opposed military preparedness. With the declaration of war, Capper supported American involvement and the Selective Service Act. Capper believed the draft would have a negative effect on Kansas wheat production at a time of increasing anxiety over a world food shortage, due to the conscription of men who were needed on the farm. The designers of the Selective Service System intended for men to be drafted into the army without disrupting agricultural productivity on the homefront. Farmers deemed necessary for food production could apply for an agricultural exemption from the draft. Despite the intent of its designers, the Selective Service System failed to operate to the satisfaction of Capper and Kansas farmers in this regard. Both Capper and

Kansas farmers were confused as to why men in the agricultural sector were being drafted during a time of food shortage. Farmers who raised these concerns were often regarded as slackers. This work examines Governor Capper's views on preparedness, the draft, and the justifications for agricultural exemptions for farmers and farm laborers during 1917.

Keywords: World War I, Allies, Military Preparedness, Wheat, Military Draft, Conscription, Selective Service Act, Arthur Capper, Agricultural Exemption, Farmers, Slackers

GOVERNOR ARTHUR CAPPER:
A VIEW ON PREPARDNESS, DRAFT POLICY AND AGRICULTURAL
EXEMPTIONS DURING WORLD WAR I

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INTRODUCTION

Elected in November 1914, and re-elected in 1916, Arthur Capper was governor of Kansas before and after the United States entered World War I. When Capper assumed office in January 1915, the Allies, which consisted of England, France, and Russia, had been at war with the German Empire for approximately six months. The United States was over two years away from officially entering the European conflict, but Capper became governor when Americans were beginning to debate military preparedness and the possibility of joining the war on the side of the Allies. Military preparedness was a movement in the United States that advocated conscription, or a military draft, as a means to enlarge and professionalize the U.S. Army in preparation for joining the Allied war effort.¹

Capper's second term as Kansas governor began in January 1917, and the United States continued to debate preparedness and the possibility of entering the war in Europe. On April 6, 1917, the U.S. Congress declared war against Germany.² In May 1917, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1917, which authorized a military draft for the nation in order to build an army.³ Men who failed to register for the draft or were seen as trying to evade being drafted were labeled "slackers" by the public.⁴

The debate on whether the nation was going to enact a draft was concluded, but other debates regarding the draft arose, such as the debate over issuing exemptions from

¹ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army*, (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 74.

² Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23.

³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

the draft for specific civilian occupations. One type of deferment a man could receive was an agricultural exemption, the idea being that farmers and farm laborers were needed on the homefront to produce the food necessary to feed the civilian populations at home and the Allied armies in the field, especially during harvest seasons.⁵

Prior to his election, Capper was primarily known in Kansas due to his career in journalism, first as a reporter, then as a correspondent, editor, and eventually publisher. In addition to prominent publications such as the *Topeka Daily Capital*, five of Capper's publications were farm periodicals by the time of World War I. Four of these were state farm journals for Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, while the fifth was the *Missouri Valley Farmer*.⁶ With this connection to the farming bloc, it was no surprise that Capper championed agricultural production during World War I and supported agricultural exemptions. Capper was, as historian Homer E. Socolofsky dubbed him, the "Farmer's Friend."⁷

This work will examine Governor Arthur Capper's views from 1915-1917 on military preparedness, the draft, food production, and the justifications for agricultural exemptions during the first draft call in 1917 as it pertained to wheat production for farmers and farm laborers, both of whom struggled with the slacker label. Only Arthur Capper's Governor's Office Records, the Arthur Capper Papers, and Kansas newspaper publications were explored for the purposes of this work. Only two of Capper's publications, the *Topeka Daily Capital* and *Capper's Weekly*, were drawn upon. The Selective Service Act was modified after the first call for troops was completed in 1917,

⁵ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 189.

⁶ Homer Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper: Publisher, Politician, and Philanthropist*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1962), 62.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.

and subsequent draft calls took place under the classification system. The classification system will not be discussed.

According to Socolofsky, Capper began his professional newspaper career in June 1884, in Topeka, Kansas. At that pivotal time in his career, he was hired as a typesetter and printer in the composing room of the *Topeka Daily Capital*, shortly after his graduation from high school in Garnett, Kansas.⁸ Capper had gained the necessary experience as a typesetter and printer from his part-time work at the *Garnett Journal*, when he was hired at age thirteen.⁹

Six months after being hired by the *Topeka Daily Capital*, Capper transitioned from printing to journalism. The shift to journalism came after his attendance of a speech given by Shawnee County Judge John Martin, in which Martin spoke on the lax enforcement of Kansas liquor laws. Capper wrote an account of the speech, which was well received by readers when it was printed the next morning in the *Daily Capital*. Capper was subsequently offered a job as a full-time reporter by Major J.K. Hudson, the editor.¹⁰ Capper's skills at reporting were recognized, and in June 1885 he was "assigned to the position of city editor of the *Capital*," a post he remained at for several years. His primary responsibilities were to cover news events at Topeka City Hall, the Statehouse, and other local venues. Furthermore, Capper kept readers informed on the political situation when the Kansas Legislature was in session.¹¹

⁸ Ibid., 18. Exactly when Capper was hired by the *Daily Capital*, is unclear. Socolofsky claimed the only aspect that was clear is that by early summer 1884, Capper was in Topeka and working for the publication.

⁹ Ibid. 13

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 20-21.

Socolofsky claimed, “Capper’s work on the *Capital* gave him an increasing reputation among Kansans during the next few years. His ‘clear, concise, and complete report of the 1889 [state] Legislature,’ helped to establish him in Kansas.”¹² It was also during this period as a reporter and city editor at the *Topeka Daily Capital* that Capper solidified himself as a member of the Republican Party. In addition to serving in “minor party positions” in Shawnee County, Kansas, Capper learned the workings of politics on the local and state levels.¹³ The *Leavenworth Times* reported Capper was elected secretary of the Kansas Republican League in February 1890.¹⁴ The *Leavenworth Times* endorsed Capper for this position, claiming that he was a “staunch Republican.”¹⁵

Capper left the *Topeka Daily Capital* and went to New York City in 1891. According to the *Brown County World*, Capper “wanted to learn something of metropolitan newspaper methods,” and was hired at the New York *Daily Tribune*. For six months Capper worked in the news and editorial department of the *Tribune*.¹⁶ Having gained the experience in metropolitan newspapers that he sought, Capper returned to the *Daily Capital*. He traveled to Washington D.C. in December 1891 as the *Daily Capital*’s Washington correspondent, writing regular columns keeping readers apprised on political events. Capper discovered he did not like Washington society, noting in his journal,

¹² Ibid., 26. Capper briefly left the *Daily Capital* in 1887, to serve as editor for the *Hugoton Hermes*, but quickly returned to Topeka.

¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴ “Kansas News,” *Leavenworth Times*, February 21, 1890, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78335254/> (accessed March 18, 2016).

¹⁵ “Capper for Secretary,” *Leavenworth Times*, February 21, 1890, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78335257/> (accessed March 26, 2016).

¹⁶ “Mr. Arthur Capper,” *Brown County World*, June 24, 1898, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4649553#spot=4649553> (accessed March 17, 2016). This article was written as a profile of Capper during his campaign for State Printer, an office he tried and failed to win twice.

“Kansas is good enough for me.”¹⁷ He returned to Kansas in May 1892, and in December, wedded his fiancé Florence Crawford. Florence was the daughter of former Republican governor of Kansas Samuel J. Crawford.¹⁸

Capper began his publishing career in September 1893, when he purchased the *Topeka Mail*, a weekly newspaper of 1,650 subscribers, focusing on politics.¹⁹ When Capper purchased the *Mail*, it was described as, “Republican in politics and its stronghold is with its country subscribers.”²⁰ Capper bought several other newspapers after his purchase of the *Mail* and by 1896, these consisted of the *Richland Argosy*, the *Kansas Breeze*, the *Sunflower*, and the *Saturday Lance*.²¹ The *Mail* and the *Kansas Breeze* were consolidated into one periodical known as the *Mail and Breeze*, initially a general and political weekly publication, but in 1895 it began to drift towards agricultural matters.²² The successful agricultural focus of the *Mail and Breeze* influenced Capper’s decision to buy the *Missouri Valley Farmer* in April 1900.²³

Capper became the majority shareholder in the Capital Publishing Company in 1901, which was the latest owner of *Topeka Daily Capital*. Capper bought out the other shareholders in 1904 and assumed sole ownership of the publication where he had made his professional start.²⁴ Under Capper’s leadership, the *Daily Capital* and the *Mail and Breeze*, (later the *Farmers Mail and Breeze*) were known for advocating progressive causes within the Republican Party. Capper claimed that his progressive views on

¹⁷ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 35-36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39-40. Crawford was also a former general in the Union Army.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41. Also known as the *North Topeka Mail*.

²⁰ “North Topeka Mail Sold,” *Leavenworth Times*, September 23, 1893, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4661189> (accessed March 19, 2016).

²¹ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 45. *Kansas Breeze* was the official state paper of Kansas.

²² *Ibid.* 45-46. Renamed the *Farmers Mail and Breeze* in 1906.

²³ *Ibid.* 49.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 50. The exception was the one share owned by Florence Capper.

fighting against railroad domination and support for President Theodore Roosevelt's trust busting activities cemented his reputation in Kansas.²⁵ Capper's support for the progressive wing of the Republican Party led to a movement to nominate him as the Republican candidate for governor in 1912, as a successor to the progressive minded Governor Walter R. Stubbs.²⁶ Kansas Republican Party leaders were searching for a candidate who could retain the votes of progressive Kansans who had supported Stubbs, while at the same time regaining the votes of Kansans who had disowned Stubbs and his progressivism. Capper was touted as a logical candidate by the *St. Louis Republic*.²⁷ Among the supporters of a Capper candidacy was William Allen White of Emporia, Kansas.²⁸

The *Topeka Daily Capital* described the support for "Mr. Capper" after he announced his bid for governor in 1911: "Mr. Capper is going to be especially strong among the farmers, many of them who were in Winfield today expressed their satisfaction with the announcement they had read or heard of. The sentiment here among progressive Republicans is very pronounced for Capper for Governor."²⁹ Capper won the Republican primary with 70 percent of the vote.³⁰ However, he failed to win the general election in 1912 against Democrat George H. Hodges. The official vote was 167,437 for Hodges and 167,408 for Capper.³¹

²⁵ Ibid., 63.

²⁶ Ibid., 72.

²⁷ Ibid., 74.

²⁸ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁹ "Endorses Capper for Governor," *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 15, 1911, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/64068465/> (accessed March 19, 2016).

³⁰ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 77.

³¹ Ibid., 80.

Hodges victory was in spite of the fact that the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that ballots in Wabaunsee County, Kansas, were improperly voided by election judges because of “the manner in which they had been marked.” Even so, the court ruled that the body responsible for counting ballots, which was the county canvassing board, had ‘passed out of existence and can not [*sic*] be revived by its own action or by that of a court.’ Capper’s only legal option was to contest the result of the election to the Kansas Senate, an option he did not take since the Democratic Party held a majority of seats.³²

In February 1914 Capper announced his intention to challenge Governor Hodges in the 1914 election. Capper had no competition in the Republican primary. The *Chanute Daily Tribune* reported in December 1913 that party leaders in Topeka had planned to “give Capper the nomination without opposition.”³³ Capper’s announcement bid was printed in the *Columbus Daily Advocate*: “I am for a second time asking the people of Kansas for their support for the highest office in the state.”³⁴ Capper acknowledged the belief that ballots had been miscounted in the previous election and that a technicality of law defeated the “will of the people” to elect him governor in 1912. Despite this, Capper urged Kansans to support him on his merits.³⁵

Capper’s attacks on the record of the Hodges Administration were effective, and his assailing of Hodges on such issues as being responsible for the largest tax hikes in the state’s history made him confident of victory in 1914. Capper’s confidence was boosted by the fact that he was a supporter of Women’s Suffrage, and women were

³² Ibid., 80-81. Attorneys for Capper claimed that 124 such ballots existed in Wabaunsee County alone.

³³ “Mr. House has Scented a Plan,” *Chanute Daily Tribune*, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4764094> (accessed March 29, 2016).

³⁴ “Arthur Capper for Governor,” *Columbus Daily Advocate*, February 25, 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/127805536/> (accessed March 19, 2016).

³⁵ Ibid.

voting for the first time in Kansas elections.³⁶ The confidence was well placed, for in a race that consisted of five candidates, Capper was elected governor in November 1914 with 220,000 votes. Hodges, Capper's closest rival, received 170,000 votes.³⁷ Thus, Arthur Capper assumed the office of Kansas governor in January 1915 and soon found himself drawn into the national preparedness debate.

The first chapter, "Military Preparedness and the Selective Service Act of 1917," examines the background of the military preparedness movement in the United States and the justification for conscription over volunteerism advocates put forth. The chapter also includes an explanation of the organization of the Selective Service System, in order for the reader to understand how the draft functioned.

The second chapter, "Arthur Capper: Peace Governor to War Governor," consists of Capper's personal views on preparedness, a volunteer army, and the United States entering World War I. The chapter also includes Capper's responsibilities as governor according to the Selective Service Act, and the steps he took to ensure Kansas conducted a well-organized draft registration on Registration Day.

The third chapter, "The Wheat Crisis," touches upon the United States' role in supplying wheat to the Allies prior to America entering the war. The chapter also analyzes the amount of wheat Kansas produced from 1914-17 to provide context for the amount Kansas contributed to the national total.

The fourth chapter, "The Kansas Food Conference," discusses Capper's recognition in March 1917 of a potential world food shortage and his belief that food

³⁶ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 84.

³⁷ "Capper is Elected Governor of Kansas," *Cheney Sentinel*, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/79561997/> (accessed March 19, 2016).

production was the key to prevention. The chapter will also examine the domestic shortages of foodstuffs caused by speculators in some regions of the nation.

The fifth and final chapter, “Governor Capper, ‘Slacker’ Farmers, and Agricultural Exemptions, 1917,” contains Capper’s efforts to convince the federal government of the necessity of agricultural exemptions for farmers from the draft. The chapter will also review the justifications given by farmers for agricultural exemptions and the struggles farmers had with the slacker label.

CHAPTER ONE

MILITARY PREPAREDNESS AND THE SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT OF 1917

Almost from the beginning of the war in Europe in July 1914, the question of military preparedness was never far from the minds of Americans. Historian John Whitley Chambers II, in *To Raise an Army*, explained that the preparedness movement had as its top spokesmen former President Theodore Roosevelt, a progressive Republican, and former Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood.¹ Together these two staunch supporters of preparedness justified an increase in the size of the nation's army by proclaiming that its current numbers were inadequate to combat a threat from a first-class power in a major conflict, as was taking place in Europe. At this time, the overall size of the regular army stood at approximately 100,000 soldiers, which could be supplemented with 112,000 National Guardsman. France and Germany by comparison had standing armies of 800,000 soldiers, because of their conscription systems.² When examined in this context of raw numbers, it was clear why preparedness advocates felt that the American army was under par.

The advocates of preparedness were initially opposed by President Woodrow Wilson, a member of the Democratic Party. Wilson reflected what he believed to be the mood of the country and advocated a policy of peace and strict neutrality when World War I commenced. In an article published in the *Hutchinson Daily News*, Wilson expressed his views on American involvement in the war:

¹ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 74. Preparedness was a movement to increase the size of the U.S. Army by adopting conscription or a military draft.

² *Ibid.*, 74-75.

My thought is of America. I am speaking, I feel sure, the earnest wish and purpose of every thoughtful American that this great country of ours, which is of course, the first in our thoughts and in our hearts, should show herself in this time of peculiar trial a nation fit beyond others to exhibit the fine poise of undisturbed judgement, the dignity of self-control, the efficiency of dispassionate action; a nation that neither sits in judgement on others nor is disturbed by her own counsels and which keeps herself fit and free to do what is honest and disinterested and truly serviceable for the peace of the world.³

Despite Wilson's initial policy of strict neutrality towards the nations at war, historian George C. Herring, Jr., in his article "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," argued that as the months went by, Wilson began a gradual shift towards preparedness for political considerations.⁴ This was despite his earlier anxieties regarding Theodore Roosevelt and his preparedness efforts. As historian Daniel M. Smith discussed in *The Great Departure*, Wilson was able to force some preparedness legislation through Congress in late 1915. It was, however, an uphill battle as many peace- and isolationist-seeking members of Congress viewed any sort of preparedness as unnecessary militarism. Part of this was due to Theodore Roosevelt, who was one of the few voices openly advocating intervention in Europe's war.⁵ Wilson only began to modify his policy of strict neutrality after the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*.

The *Lusitania*, a British ocean liner suspected by Germany of carrying munitions for the war (which turned out to be true), was torpedoed by a German U-Boat on May 7, 1915, causing international outrage. The incident was the first test of Wilson's policy of

³ "President Wilson Urges Neutrality," *Hutchinson Daily News*, August 18, 1914, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/1899332/> (accessed March 26, 2015).

⁴ George C. Herring, Jr., "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," *Journal of Southern History* 30, no. 4 (November, 1964): 383, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2204278> (accessed January 8, 2015).

⁵ Daniel M. Smith, *The Great Departure*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 70-71.

strict neutrality, because of the nearly 1,200 victims, 128 were American citizens. Wilson had no choice but to respond to such an incident.⁶

In reacting to the *Lusitania* incident, Wilson chose a policy of holding Germany to “strict accountability,” which in this case meant a diplomatic note of protest to Germany, defending the rights of Americans to travel the seas safely. Included in the American protest was the threat of severing diplomatic ties if unrestricted submarine warfare continued. While not quite the militant reaction some of Wilson’s opponents demanded, it received the support of a majority of Americans.⁷ A second note of protest soon followed the first, and for the moment, succeeded in satisfying American honor with a German pledge to halt unrestricted submarine warfare.⁸

The most potent effect of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* was that it served as the catalyst for Wilson’s retreat from strict neutrality. Despite the non-military reaction, the incident began to alter the mood of the nation on the question of preparedness. While the majority of Americans were not ready to declare war, Americans became more open to the idea of increases in military spending to the point that it became a political issue, forcing Wilson’s hand out of fear that if he ignored preparedness, the Republican Party might gain a political advantage in Congress.⁹

The *Lusitania* incident caused a shift in the nation’s awareness, which was highlighted by an article in the *Wichita Beacon* published on the anniversary of the disaster. The *Beacon* reported that the incident “caused rumors of war which have never subsided.” It also had the result of strengthening the relationship between the United

⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁷ Ibid., 55. Unrestricted submarine warfare is the act of sinking vessels without warning.

⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁹ Herring, “James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy,” 383.

States and England because it was the first time the United States and Great Britain had “suffered in common since they were opposed to one another in the War of Independence.”¹⁰

Historian David M. Kennedy in *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* expanded on the idea that it was because Wilson sought to protect his vulnerable political flanks that he drifted to preparedness, which was dubbed “reasonable preparedness” during the summer and fall of 1915.¹¹ Chambers related that this was particularly true in the urban east where the clamor for preparedness was strongest and where a Republican Party, unified around the issue, could pose a threat to Wilson’s re-election chances.¹² During this period, Wilson’s theme was consistent: there was no direct threat to American security, but the nation should prepare itself to ensure its safety because of the events in Europe.¹³

The public critics of preparedness were alarmed at this abrupt change in policy from Wilson, a man who had once declared that preparedness advocates were “nervous and excited about the nation’s defenses.”¹⁴ From the very beginning of preparedness, pacifist progressives, led by such men as Amos Pinchot, believed that the entire issue was centered on the desire to bolster American industry.¹⁵ This was not an unfounded criticism, as many of the civilians pushing for preparedness were members of the corporate and professional elite and centered in the northeast.¹⁶ Further opposition came

¹⁰ “Anniversary of Lusitania Disaster Finds Nations Still Seething Over Ship’s Fate!,” *Wichita Beacon*, May 8, 1916, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2086643> (accessed March 28, 2015).

¹¹ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

¹² Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 104.

¹³ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 33.

¹⁴ Herring, “James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy,” 383.

¹⁵ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 32.

¹⁶ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 80.

from the Women's Suffrage movement, which had championed Wilson's original views of peace and neutrality. The members of the suffrage movement felt that militarism and war would unnecessarily glorify males and make the struggle for Women's Suffrage more difficult.¹⁷

The major opposition to preparedness came from rural citizens, primarily located in the South and Midwest, who favored isolationism.¹⁸ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a rural citizen was defined as a person residing in a city or town with 2,500 residents or less. The 1910 census, the last taken before the war, calculated that only 45.8 percent of Americans lived in urban areas. Kansas at this time had only 29.2 percent of its population classified as urban.¹⁹

What this amounted to was that with more than half of Americans residing in rural areas, rural citizens had a numerical advantage and were a significant political factor. Added to their prestige was former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, Wilson's former secretary of state, who had resigned because of the inflammatory diplomatic notes sent to Germany over the *Lusitania's* sinking. Bryan served as the chief spokesman of rural America and was not shy in voicing the opinion that the minority urban population, with economies built on industry and mainly confined to the Northeast, was unnecessarily leading the nation into war for the profit of manufacturers who produced the materials of war.²⁰ New England alone had an urban population of 76.3

¹⁷ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 30. While much more could be discussed regarding the opposition movement from peace and Women's Suffrage organizations, it is not necessary to provide an understanding for this thesis.

¹⁸ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 107.

¹⁹ United States Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1921*, "Distribution of the Population as Urban and Rural, with Per Cent Urban 1900, 1910, 1920: By States and Geographic Division," (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 54.

²⁰ Chambers, *To Raise and Army*, 107. In Bryan's opinion, the diplomatic notes were inflammatory.

percent and was representative of the suspicions that rural America had about more-industrialized regions.²¹ These factors resulted in pacifists such as Pinchot linking together with feminists and the agrarian populations of the South and Midwest to form a coalition attempting to stop preparedness. Although loosely aligned, the coalition did agree on the viewpoint that militarism was leading the nation on the road to war, despite preparedness advocates' best efforts to portray the movement as defensive in nature.²²

Wilson had essentially assumed the leadership of the preparedness movement in 1915, after the *Lusitania* incident. His position generated considerable opposition, not only among anti-preparedness forces, but also within the preparedness movement.²³ The president had announced to Congress in November 1915 his intention to create a stronger army, but how exactly to go about doing this was extremely controversial.²⁴ The question became whether to strengthen the army through traditional American volunteerism or through universal military service via conscription.

Wilson advocated "reasonable preparedness" and favored a modification of the volunteer system, rather than initially embracing conscription. Broadly speaking, the modifications to the volunteer plan which Wilson espoused called for a "Continental Army" to be established as a reserve force of 400,000 men, which would replace the National Guard as the nation's ready reserve. The National Guard, despite being the nation's traditional reserve force, was seen as backwards and inefficient. The new Reserves would be under the direct control of the federal government, be trained as a component of the regular army, and be commanded by regular army officers. In addition

²¹ Department of Commerce, *Distribution of the Population*, 54.

²² Chambers, *To Raise and Army*, 107.

²³ Herring, "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," 384.

²⁴ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 33.

to this responsibility, the regular army itself would see modest increases in its actual strength.²⁵

However, it soon became clear that this plan could not pass both houses of Congress, and that not even Wilson's fellow Democrats supported it in full. This was particularly true in the agrarian South and Midwest, which maintained isolationist tendencies. Despite Wilson's best efforts to promote this plan on a speaking tour of the Midwest, enough Americans continued to oppose the Continental Army that Wilson was forced to relent.²⁶

The rural agrarian populations of the South and the Midwest continued to be suspicious of Wilson's Continental Army, even though it was meant as an alternative to more radical preparedness notions, such as outright universal military service.²⁷ It was still linked to the industrial East and seen as leading down the road to conscription, so much so that the president had to replace his Secretary of War, Lyndley Garrison, because of his perceived pro-conscription stance.²⁸ No matter how conscription was portrayed, even in regions outside the South and Midwest, in the minds of Americans as a whole, conscription was synonymous with intervention, and the majority of the public continued to oppose taking such action.²⁹

One final result of the Continental Army plan was that in addition to alienating the populations of the South and Midwest, the Continental Army also irked Theodore Roosevelt and his followers. They were extremely doubtful that the 400,000 men the plan

²⁵ Herring, "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," 388-89.

²⁶ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 114. Wilson's speaking tour brought him to Topeka, Kansas.

²⁷ Herring, "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," 389-90.

²⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 147.

²⁹ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 112.

called for could be raised through volunteerism alone. The proposed plan also brought down the wrath of the National Guard establishment, whose officers were in an uproar because they felt their role would be marginalized under the Continental Army.³⁰

Because Wilson was forced to relent for political reasons, what came out of the preparedness chaos of 1916 was a compromise between the factions in the form of the Hay Bill, officially known as the National Defense Act of 1916.³¹ The act increased the size of the regular army as well as the National Guard at the federal government's expense. The stipulation was that any state's National Guard could be called into active service at any time, under the control of the federal government.³² Each side in the preparedness debate of 1916 obtained a concession that they wished for. Preparedness advocates obtained increases in the size of the existing army, while its opponents were able to ward off the creation of a new federal force viewed as too close to conscription for comfort. The most important aspect of the National Defense Act of 1916 was that it symbolized the divide between urban conservatives and local-oriented agrarians who favored isolation.³³

During the presidential campaign of 1916, Wilson successfully managed the preparedness issue and won re-election because he was able to hold his anti-war coalition together, as his policies appeared less belligerent than his Republican opponent, Charles Evans Hughes. As William Allen White explained in his autobiography, Wilson's campaign slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War," caught on with the American people. The slogan allowed Wilson to receive the support of many progressive states, which harbored

³⁰ Herring, "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," 389.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 383.

³² Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 112.

³³ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 122.

a large bloc of voters with isolationist and anti-preparedness tendencies that traditionally voted Republican, such as Kansas. Wilson though, never actually uttered this slogan himself, nor did he endorse it. After his re-election in 1916, this allowed Wilson the opening of taking the nation to war at a time of his own choosing, if the situation warranted such drastic action.³⁴

The notion of conscription had been discussed since the start of the preparedness movement, but it was not until 1916, when Wilson embraced it, that debates between volunteerism and conscription took center stage.³⁵ Critics of conscription contended that the practice of compelling men into military service was undemocratic and would create the same type of militaristic society as Germany by compelling men to serve rather than inducing them willingly to defend their country.³⁶

Historian Christopher Capozzola, in his book *Uncle Sam Wants You*, explained that Leonard Wood (former Army Chief of Staff) argued that a volunteer force actually violated the American principles of freedom and equality. Conscription advocates believed that there was no valid reason one man should have to enlist while another man enjoyed the virtues of that defense at home, and that everyone should be obligated to defend traditional American values.³⁷

Conscription activists had had some small successes in the area of pushing the notion of obligation to service, such as the Plattsburg Movement, which offered professional training during the summer months for young men to become army officers

³⁴ William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White*, ed. Sally Foreman Griffith (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1973), 276-277.

³⁵ Chambers, *To Raise and Army*, 112.

³⁶ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 145.

³⁷ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24.

and lead to the creation of the Military Training Camps Association.³⁸ However, those enthusiasts' ultimate goal of creating a large standing professional army, a "National Army," under the control of the federal government through conscription, remained elusive.

Preparedness activists assumed that conscription would solve the problem of a volunteer force by distributing the burden of military service fairly. It would remedy the small regular army, which as previously discussed had approximately 100,000 men in its ranks and was considered an inadequate size according to professional soldiers such as Leonard Wood.³⁹ In the event of a major conflict, Wood was extremely critical of volunteerism because enlistments were dependent on individual enthusiasm for men to do their duty. It was not clear whether enough men would enlist to fill the army's ranks in wartime. Furthermore, with conscription, the United States could not only solve the manpower problem, but it could also ensure that a well-trained force was ready to be deployed quickly if need be.⁴⁰

The lack of pre-war training was another major criticism of an all-volunteer force; since before an army could be sent into the field, each soldier had to be professionally trained.⁴¹ While those who served in the National Guard had military experience, some observers, most notably Wood, had their doubts about their effectiveness as a whole during a conflict. This was because the National Guard was controlled by state governors and was susceptible to local politics rather than focused on military professionalism.⁴² A

³⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 146.

³⁹ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 75.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 86.

brief examination of the history of the Kansas National Guard provides some credence to this argument.

Historian Brian Dexter Fowles, in his work *A Guard in Peace and War*, explained that two decades prior to the war in Europe, a dispute erupted between the Republican and Populist Parties in Kansas over state legislature election results. The dispute escalated to a point where Republicans barricaded themselves inside House of Representatives Hall; hundreds of men were deputized to protect the representatives from being removed.⁴³ Then Governor Lorenzo Lewelling, a member of the Populist Party, directed the Kansas National Guard to clear the Republicans out.⁴⁴ This did not happen because Colonel James White Frierson, the officer selected for the task, refused to use his troops against the Republicans. As it turned out, both Colonel Frierson and his replacement were members of the Republican National Guard establishment and had reservations about using their authority against fellow party members.⁴⁵

The political controversy over the Kansas National Guard, and its perceived Republican Party bias, continued up through the Spanish-American War, when Washington requested that Kansas supply troops to supplement the regular army. Governor John W. Leedy, a member of the Populist Party, refused to mobilize the existing Kansas National Guard units for this task and instead raised four regiments of volunteers in order to supply Kansas's quota.⁴⁶

⁴³ Brian Dexter Fowles, *A Guard in Peace and War: The History of the Kansas National Guard, 1854-1987*, (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1989), 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 42. Christopher C. Lovett, "To Serve Faithfully: The Twenty-Third Colored Volunteer Infantry and the Spanish American War," *Kansas History* 21, no 4 (winter 1998-1999): 261.

In addition to political bias, the Kansas National Guard also showed its lack of professionalism with its inability to maintain an adequate number of soldiers on its rolls. The *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kansas 1915-1916*, shows that on December 31, 1914, there were 121 officers and 1,776 enlisted men on the rolls in Kansas. One year later, those numbers increased slightly to 128 officers and 1,904 enlisted men.⁴⁷ These numbers were well below the authorized 154 officers and 2,492 enlisted soldiers the Kansas National Guard was expected to maintain during peace time.⁴⁸ This led to the obvious question: if the Kansas National Guard could not maintain volunteer strength during peace time, how could it be expected to do so during a time of war? The low number of volunteers added credence to Wood's claim that volunteerism alone was not reliable.

Taking into account the criticisms of political infighting and military unprofessionalism in the context of readying the nation for war if needed, one can see why Wood and others were skeptical of the National Guard as a whole. While not every state's National Guard may have been reflected in Kansas's situation, enough were that professional military men believed the National Guard could not be depended upon in modern war.

A 1916 War Department memo referred to voluntary service as "undemocratic, unreliable, inefficient, and extravagant."⁴⁹ This summed up the argument that preparedness advocates kept putting forth in the name of conscription. A final justification for conscription used by advocates was to cite Great Britain as an example;

⁴⁷ Kansas Adjutant General, *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Kansas 1915-16*, "Organization," (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1917), 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁹ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 24.

Great Britain embraced conscription in 1916 out of national necessity. In response, the *Wichita Daily Eagle* claimed, “there is a point beyond which the volunteer system will not go.”⁵⁰

The practice of conscription allowed for a sufficient number of men to be raised and efficiently trained for service. Even more important, it allowed for an efficient *allocation* of those men in the event of a large-scale mobilization, a lesson which was learned from the British after they had adopted conscription.⁵¹ While Wilson’s reasons for relenting his opposition and signaling his support for draft legislation in February 1917 are not exactly clear, what is clear is that the dilemma of the British with their volunteer system played a role in his thinking. It was argued that the point of conscription was not to force men into army service against their will, but to make sure the right men went into the army and the necessary ones stayed on the homefront.⁵²

Great Britain, which had not utilized a draft until 1916, discovered after two years of war that many of the original army volunteers had been skilled workers that came from the nation’s factories and farms and would have been more valuable to the war effort at home, continuing their industrial and agricultural jobs. Unfortunately, many of those men were killed in the line of duty. Their value as industrial and agriculture workers was not easily replaced, which greatly hampered the manufacture of munitions, and even more significantly, the production of food stuffs to feed the army and civilian population at home and at the front.⁵³ Wilson feared that volunteerism would inflict the

⁵⁰ “Conscription,” *Wichita Daily Eagle*, January 1, 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/64410719/> (accessed April 5, 2015).

⁵¹ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 24.

⁵² Kennedy, *Over Here*, 147.

⁵³ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 88.

same types of hardships in the United States as it had in Great Britain and recognized that when “men choose themselves,” they sometimes disregard their other responsibilities. As Wilson explained, the idea of the draft was not to draw men into the military service of the country, but to assign men to the necessary labor at home.⁵⁴

If adopted, the Selective Service System would make this possible, whether the necessary labor be in industry or agriculture, or the armed forces. It was clear if the United States was going to play a major role in the war, it would have to raise and organize a large conscripted army.

Once Wilson had signaled his support for a draft bill, Congress began writing the Selective Service Act of 1917, a copy of which can be seen in appendix A, formally titled “An Act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States.” The main question became how to design a system that could rectify the mistakes of the nation’s last military draft, which had taken place during the Civil War.⁵⁵ To do this the War Department turned to the army’s chief legal officer, Judge Advocate General Enoch Crowder, who was the chief designer of the Selective Service System. Crowder was later named provost marshal general shortly after the Selective Service Act went into effect, where his main role was to administer the system.⁵⁶ While the purpose of this thesis is not to provide the details of how the Selective Service functioned, a basic understanding is necessary, beginning with an understanding of the problems of the Civil War draft.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 148.

⁵⁵ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 179.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

According to Provost Marshal General Enoch Crowder, “In the Civil War cooperation was not sought. The draft was a federal measure, and it demanded a federal execution. Reaching out into the states, it placed its unfamiliar hand upon the citizen.”⁵⁷ The most pressing modification that Crowder sought to change from the Civil War draft conducted by the federal government was the basic organization of the system. The Civil War draft was administered by military officers and brought federal officials into the homes of citizens, informing them of who would and would not be drafted, which in retrospect, created considerable animosity towards the federal government. The difficulties encountered by the Civil War-era system were responsible for much of the opposition to once again adopting a draft for the nation, especially from those citizens who either remembered or had heard stories of the New York City Draft Riots of 1863.⁵⁸

The fact that the U.S. Army was used to suppress these riots did not rally any more citizens to the federal government’s cause. This explained why Crowder and others within the War Department decided that a system of local boards was best suited to administer the new Selective Service System. In this way, any responsibility for induction or exemption from army service would lay with the “friends and neighbors” of citizens’ local communities and thus serve as a buffer between the individual citizen and the federal government.⁵⁹ It was hoped this would be enough to protect federal officials from any anger directed towards the draft.

The concept of local control, which Crowder referred to as “supervised decentralization,” had the benefit of cutting out the federal bureaucracy that would have

⁵⁷ Enoch Crowder, *The Spirit of Selective Service*, (New York: The Century Company, 1920), 117.

⁵⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 151-152.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

been created to handle the day-to-day operations of the draft, which in all likelihood would have slowed down the induction (selecting) of men into military service. This was paramount because Crowder not only had the responsibility of raising a large army but also for ensuring that by September 1917 the men who made up this army were in their respective training camps, preparing to be deployed to France as soon as possible.⁶⁰ Though this was a difficult goal, the men were in their camps by the expected time.

An article, published by the *Evening Kansan-Republican*, highlighted this accomplishment. By September 19, there were 300,000 newly drafted recruits on their way to hastily-constructed military training cantonments (camps) to begin their life in the army. Kansas's contribution to this endeavor was Camp Funston (part of Fort Riley) where 2,700 men arrived to be part of the newly established 89th Infantry Division. By September 23 it was expected to have 18,609 men at the camp to begin their training. It should be noted that only 2,576 of these newly arrived draftees were from Kansas; the others hailed from nearby states, which were required to send their draft quotas to Camp Funston.⁶¹ Before any man arrived at a training camp, he had to go through his local draft board.

The design of the selective service system under supervised decentralization was simple and consisted of two parts. The first part was registration by all required men. This was followed by the second part: the board's determination of induction or exemption for each registrant.⁶² While local authorities administered the draft itself, the

⁶⁰ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 180-181.

⁶¹ "Great Army Camp Ready for Them," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, September 18, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/94054780/> (accessed March 31, 2015).

⁶² Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, "Selective Service," (Topeka, 1919), 145. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

order of selection for potential draftees was determined through a central lottery system in Washington, D.C.⁶³ The first draft registration under the Selective Service Act was held on June 5, 1917, and known as Registration Day; the first draft lottery was held in July 1917.⁶⁴ Draft registration was required for all men between 21-30 years of age.⁶⁵

Following the War Department's concept of supervised decentralization, and in order to conduct the draft registration, the county served as the principle administrative unit in each state. The only exceptions to this were cities with populations of 30,000 or more, where wards were grouped together into registration districts. Within each county-district, there was a three-person registration board, which was officially appointed by the governor and consisted of county officers who supervised the registration process.⁶⁶

The county officers consisted of the sheriff, who acted as the executive officer, the county clerk, who functioned as the record keeper, and the county physician, who was in charge of the physical examination of each registrant. In order to simplify the registration process, Crowder also decided to utilize the existing voting structure in each state. This not only further emphasized the "local" aspect of draft registration, it also served as a way to connect the right to vote to one's civic obligation of military service.⁶⁷ Therefore, on Registration Day, (June 5, 1917) all the men had to do was show up to their normal polling place if they were within the prescribed age limits of the draft, just as if they were going to cast a ballot.⁶⁸

⁶³ Harry A. Marmion, "Historical Background of Selective Service in the United States," in *Selective Service and American Society*, ed. Roger W. Little (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969), 39.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 181.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

An extremely simple 12-question registration card was then filled out which was later used to determine draft eligibility. Due to the concerns about proper placement of skilled factory workers or farmers, question seven asked, “What is your present trade, occupation, or office?”⁶⁹ A complete example of this registration form, which was filled out for Herbert Lee Hamilton, can be viewed in appendix B.

While registration itself was required by law for all men between the ages of 21-30, the federal government decided against using coercive methods in order to conduct the registration and instead encouraged “public enthusiasm” to compel young men to present themselves.⁷⁰ The Wilson Administration actively encouraged local patriotic speeches and the holding of parades leading up to Registration Day, in order to whip the public into a patriotic frenzy.

The lack of coercion and focus on patriotism permitted Wilson to portray the Selective Service System not as a draft, but instead as “a nation that had volunteered in mass.” Of those “volunteers,” some would be selected for military service. At the same time, Wilson also encouraged the public to report men who failed to register for the draft, and to take note of any other signs of problems with registration. In other words, he urged the public to be vigilant when it came to the draft.⁷¹ Vigilance and public pressure served throughout the entire war as a substitute for the government taking formal action against the majority of non-registrants, or as they began to be called in 1917 terms, “slackers.” While the term slacker was popularized as a label for men who failed to register for the

⁶⁹ “Instructions for Selective Service Registration; No One To Be Excused,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 10, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1729485> (accessed February 9, 2015).

⁷⁰ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 184.

⁷¹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 150.

draft or attempted to avoid being drafted, it was also used as a general term for anyone who was seen as trying to avoid doing their part for the war effort.⁷²

After registration had been conducted, where every eligible male had presented himself at their local polling precinct, the second part of the Selective Service System, the process of selecting whom to induct into the army or whom to exempt, took place. As Crowder said, “The important and emergent problem was to make the withdrawals from civil life in such a way as to bring about the least possible disturbance in the normal composition of peacetime industrial life.”⁷³ Originally, it was intended for the local county registration boards to serve a dual function as selection boards. But this plan was derailed by Congress, which mandated that the draft boards that made the actual selection decisions be appointed by the president.⁷⁴

The county registration boards were replaced by three-member local draft boards. In many areas, however, and particularly in Kansas, the jurisdiction of the local draft boards remained almost identical to the registration boards.⁷⁵ As reported in the *Alma Enterprise*, local draft boards were organized on the basis of one board for each county of less than 45,000 residents or cities over 30,000 residents.⁷⁶ According to the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, Kansas had a total of 115 local draft boards when they were disbanded in 1919.⁷⁷ This was out of a total of 4,647 local draft boards across the nation. A final note on the significance of the local draft boards was that while they were

⁷² Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 30.

⁷³ Crowder, *The Spirit of Selective Service*, 126-27.

⁷⁴ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 182.

⁷⁵ Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” 145.

⁷⁶ “Wilson Gives Out Rules for Draft,” *Alma Enterprise*, July 13, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/93589604/> (accessed April 1, 2015).

⁷⁷ “State Draft Boards Are Demobilized [sic] Now,” *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, March 31, 1919, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/59709564/> (accessed April 1, 2015).

officially appointed by the president, the nominations for the posts were submitted by the governors of each state. This meant that governors were able to exercise some influence, even if it was unofficial.⁷⁸

In addition to local draft boards, it was also necessary to create district draft boards or appeals boards, as they were called. The district boards encompassed each federal judicial district and had two primary roles: the first was to supervise the local boards, while the second, the more critical, was to act as a body of appeal for men who were dissatisfied with the local board's selection and exemption decisions. The task of monitoring the labor situation in the nation then, fell to each of these district boards.⁷⁹ While the local draft boards had jurisdiction over most claims of exemption, this was not the case when a claim was based on an industrial or agricultural concern; this jurisdiction fell on the district boards exclusively.⁸⁰

An article from the *Hutchinson News* clarified that Kansas had within its borders the first and second district draft boards for its two federal judicial districts, which were headquartered in Topeka and Wichita. The first district draft board had within its jurisdiction residents of the first, second, third, and fourth Congressional districts. The second district draft board had within its jurisdiction residents of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth Congressional districts.⁸¹ As was the case with the local draft boards, it is important to bear in mind that while the district boards were officially appointed by the president, the nominations for the posts were submitted by the governors of each state.⁸²

⁷⁸ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 182.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, "Selective Service," 148. Only local and district draft boards will be discussed in this thesis.

⁸¹ "A Double Examination," *Hutchinson News*, July 25, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2109775> (accessed April 1, 2015).

⁸² Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 182.

[See appendix C for a list of all members who served on the Kansas district boards for 1917-18].

The process of determining whom to exempt from army service and whom to induct was a controversial issue throughout the entire war. The local draft boards that carried out the process were given little guidance in their jobs of balancing the needs of the army with the needs of vital service at home during the first draft call, which took place based on the information received from the June 5 registration.⁸³ In 1917, there were very few blanket exemptions granted. Congress, when designing the draft law, had specifically exempted state and federal legislators, clergymen, and divinity students, while giving the president the authority to exclude county and local officials. As a result of these limited exemptions, there were widely varying standards between local draft boards, because each man and his claim for exemption had to be judged on an individual basis.⁸⁴

The question of granting exemptions based on dependency required a man to have a wife and/or children at home who were dependent on him. This type of exemption proved to be problematic for local draft boards. The Selective Service Act specified in section 4 the information on men who were to be excused because of dependency, “those in a status with respect to persons dependent upon them for support which renders their exclusion or discharge advisable.”⁸⁵

This vague guideline was the only “standard” which local draft boards had to go by when initially considering claims of dependency, which certainly left room for

⁸³ Ibid., 187.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 188.

⁸⁵ *An Act to Authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States, Statutes at Large* 40, sec. 4, 79 (1919).

interpretation. Using it as a guideline to consider claims proved difficult, and it is understandable why there was variance between draft board decisions.

Many local draft boards simply interpreted the dependency clause in the Selective Service Act to mean such things as all married men were entitled to exemption if they had a wife and children at home, while others still had a much more hardline approach as to what constituted dependency, which often resulted in an intensive prying into the couple's life to determine if their claims were valid.⁸⁶ The fact that local draft boards were given wide discretion over whether induction into the army created an undue hardship for a man's claimed dependents resulted in countless appeals to the district boards, who often were not any more confident in themselves than the local boards, when they considered dependency exemptions.⁸⁷

The question of dependency became so controversial that when the first wave of men was being selected, the War Department felt the need to address the nation and *attempt* to clarify which men qualified for dependency exemptions. An article in the *Topeka Daily Capital* highlighted Crowder's concerns over dependency exemptions in his role as provost marshal general. The War Department received reports of 80 percent of men in districts filing dependency claims. Crowder reiterated that the Selective Service law as written did not actually *guarantee* any man exemption on the grounds of dependency; "It only authorizes the president to exclude or discharge from (the) draft those in a status with respect to persons dependent upon them for support which renders their exclusion or discharge advisable."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 156.

⁸⁷ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 185.

⁸⁸ "Must Cut Number of Exemptions is Crowder's Order," *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 10, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2124239> (accessed April 3 2015).

Three points are clear from this article: first, Crowder was emphasizing that in order to have a valid dependency exemption, a man had to prove that his family was solely dependent on him as their source for income and faced a financial hardship if he was drafted. The second, Crowder believed that many men were filing these claims in an attempt to be deceitful, noting, “There is a moral certainty, in the extravagance of this percentage, that hundreds of unfounded claims are included in these totals.”⁸⁹ The third, and perhaps the most important, was that Crowder blamed the local draft boards for these high percentages, believing that they had not done enough to repress them and claimed, “In absence of stern repression by local boards of unmeritorious claims, this result is inevitable.”⁹⁰ Crowder either did not recognize the fact that dependency claims and exemptions were so high because the local boards were unclear on what constituted dependency, or he simply chose to ignore it.

Kansas attempted to take Crowder’s message to heart on dependency claims and exemptions. A November 1917 article in the *Topeka Daily Capital* expressed the views of the first district board when they acknowledged that many exemptions during the first draft call were granted without proper investigation, a mistake that would not be repeated during the second draft call, especially as the first district board had come to the conclusion that in several of these cases, a man’s family, “would receive better support if the head of the household was in the army.” A conclusion reached based on a decision of the War Department, which mandated that all drafted soldiers had to, at a minimum, allot

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

“one-half” of their pay to their wives and children at home. It was hoped that this would reduce claims of dependency on financial grounds.⁹¹

The question of exemptions proved to be as difficult for draft boards during the first draft in 1917, when claims were made based on agricultural or industrial necessity. As stated in the Selective Service Act regarding agricultural or industrial exemptions, “persons engaged in industries, including agriculture, found to be necessary to the maintenance of the Military Establishment or the effective operation of the military forces or the maintenance of national interest during the emergency” were eligible for exemptions from the draft.⁹²

Much like the guidelines for exemptions based on dependency status, the claims for granting an agricultural or industrial exemption were vague and open to interpretation by individual draft boards. This is a situation that is difficult to understand in retrospect given that one of the primary justifications of conscription was to strike a balance between the need of the army abroad and the need for production at home. As there was no blanket exemption given to industrial or agricultural workers, just as with dependency claims, draft board members were expected to hear each claim individually and exercise their best judgment. The civilians who made up the draft boards did not have any idea how to strike the balance and determine if a man was more valuable on the farm than in the army.⁹³ After all, what exactly did district draft boards use as criteria to distinguish between a farmer who was necessary to the effective operation of the military during the

⁹¹ “Exemptions Difficult For Husbands and Fathers,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 6, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=212417> (accessed April 3, 2015).

⁹² *An Act to Authorize the President, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 79.

⁹³ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 189.

war and another farmer who was not? It was a question for which draft boards did not have a satisfactory answer.

Questions such as these regarding agricultural exemptions under the first call for troops came to light when implementing the draft in 1917. Many farmers could not understand why an exemption request was denied or were confused about why the nation was drafting farmers to begin with, when food production was a national necessity. Capper understood the necessity of issuing agricultural exemptions for Kansas farmers and his viewpoint will be discussed in Chapter Five. Before this can be examined, it is necessary to examine Capper's own views on military preparedness and the draft as the debate unfolded in 1915-17, and how he guided Kansas through those years.

CHAPTER TWO

ARTHUR CAPPER: PEACE GOVERNOR TO WAR GOVERNOR

When newly elected Governor Arthur Capper ascended the stage on January 11, 1915, to deliver his first inaugural address at Representative Hall in Topeka, Kansas, the European conflict was far from his mind. Capper told his audience, “We are realizing in Kansas that there is much to do. I invite all who would speed the progress of good government, of decency and justice, and peace and brotherhood among men, to join hands with me in combating the social and political evils and the economic wrongs from which we suffer.”¹

Historian Homer E. Socolofsky, in his classic work *Arthur Capper: Publisher, Politician, and Philanthropist*, informed readers that Capper’s first inaugural speech focused on state and local governmental concerns in its entirety, especially in the areas of taxation, government waste, and progressive-era ideals such as scientific business methods that could improve efficiency.² Capper did not allude to the war in Europe, which indicated that his tenure as governor of Kansas would not be affected by the fighting in Europe. While it was to be expected that as a newly elected governor, Capper’s first speech would focus on concerns specifically related to Kansas, it was odd, given the scale of the conflict in Europe, that he did not make a reference to the carnage, if only to mention war’s futility.

¹ Arthur Capper, “First Inaugural Address,” *Addresses and Messages*, (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 206.

² Homer Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper: Publisher, Politician, and Philanthropist*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1962), 87.

It was even more of an oddity because Capper was born to parents who were members of the Society of Friends, more commonly known as Quakers. His mother Isabelle was born into the religion and his father Herbert converted soon after their marriage.³ Quakers were known for being one of the “peace” churches, which advocated pacifism in the face of conflict. Pacifism during this time, according to historian Charles Chatfield, was defined as “one who advocated international cooperation for peace.”⁴ During his first term, Capper opposed military preparedness and the entry of the United States into the European war. As the nation edged towards entering the conflict, Capper’s views on preparedness and entering the war gradually shifted until he supported a military draft for the nation. With Capper’s support, the successful registration of Kansas men for the draft on Registration Day was a certainty.

Looking back, this failure to mention the war in his first inaugural address may appear to be an oddity, however, Socolofsky explained that this omission was not out of character for Capper. Even during the gubernatorial campaign of 1914, when the war was well underway, Capper’s only references to the war were to “express gratitude” that the nation was not involved and to briefly mention his opposition to possible war profiteering.⁵ Local issues drew Capper’s attention during his gubernatorial campaign, particularly the extravagance of his opponent, incumbent Governor George H. Hodges, involving government waste, expanding state government, and Hodges’ taxation policies.⁶ These local issues centering upon inefficient government were reflected in

³ Ibid., 5-6.

⁴ Charles Chatfield, “World War I and the Liberal Pacifist in the United States,” *American Historical Review* 75, no.7 (December, 1970): 1920, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1848023> (accessed May 18, 2015).

⁵ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 87.

⁶ Ibid., 84.

Capper's first inaugural address because they were the core of his campaign. It was therefore not surprising he completely ignored foreign and national affairs.⁷

At first Capper was satisfied with repairing the damage to the state government he believed his predecessor had caused. Not long after assuming the governorship, however, he was thrust into the national spotlight and had to take his first "preparedness test," reacting to the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915. Almost immediately, his opinion about the *Lusitania* tragedy was sought by the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. Despite his best efforts to avoid the national spotlight, the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* was so outrageous that Capper felt he needed to respond. It was also an indication that no matter how hard he tried, it was difficult to remain distant from national affairs.

In his reply to the *Chicago Tribune* on May 10, Capper voiced his personal outrage: "The wanton massacre of innocent American non-combatants by the destruction of the *Lusitania* in utter disregard of all rules of civilized warfare has shocked our people beyond measure."⁸ Capper's response offered a look into popular feelings that most Kansans felt, even from a state that was, "free from the spirit of jingoism."⁹

While expressing outrage at Germany, Capper let it be known that the citizens of Kansas were not ready to rush to war over the incident and did not desire "hasty action" in responding to the crisis. It is important to note that Capper, much like the nation as a whole, felt that the incident was an intense blow to American national honor and that some sort of action had to be taken. What the proper course of action was Capper did not say in his reply to the *Tribune*, instead leaving an open-ended response with a nod that

⁷ Ibid., 87.

⁸ Arthur Capper, "Kansas and the *Lusitania*," *Addresses and Messages*, (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 1.

⁹ Ibid. Jingoism is an aggressive foreign policy.

President Wilson had the support of Kansas in whatever decision he made with Germany.¹⁰

What Capper believed to be the proper course of action was expressed directly to President Wilson in a May 10 telegram, after he had related the sentiment of the people of Kansas. Capper wrote, “I wish to personally assure you of the universal and hopeful confidence expressed on all sides in Kansas on your patriotic and prayerful solicitude to find the right course for the nation. The American people with singleness of heart, support you in whatever action you may deem it wise to take in in this crisis.”¹¹ Capper then stated that he believed the American government’s response to the *Lusitania* should be economic retaliation against Germany by halting all commerce to the nation that engaged in unrestricted submarine warfare. Capper noted: “It has been suggested here that the United States call upon all other neutral nations to unite with it in forbidding commerce with Germany and Austria until the ‘war zone’ doctrine of submarine attacks on passenger ships carrying women, children and non-combatants is formally repudiated and abandoned.”¹² Capper ended his suggestion to Wilson by proclaiming that such actions would “afford a valuable test of the efficiency of economic pressure as a substitute for war.”¹³

These responses and suggestions from Capper to use economics in place of war were not surprising because of his traditional Quaker ideals that forbade violence, even during a moment of national crisis such as the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*. A month after

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Telegram, Arthur Capper to President Woodrow Wilson, 10 May 1915, Box 5, Folder 428, Arthur Capper Governor’s Office Records 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

his inauguration, Capper had reached out to local World Peace groups and orchestrated a state-wide conference in Topeka, which firmly set him in the anti-war camp.¹⁴ The peace conference placed Capper nicely into the realm of a pre-1917 American pacifist, according to Chatfield's definition.¹⁵

In examining Capper's claim that he would be supportive of whatever decision Wilson made in his response to the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Capper at least implied he would support a decision to go to war if Wilson deemed it necessary. Prior to the *Lusitania* incident, Wilson had never indicated anything but a resistance to preparedness and intervention in Europe, maintaining a policy of strict neutrality for the United States.¹⁶ Knowing this, Capper could safely say he would support Wilson's response to the *Lusitania* in whatever form it took, without a realistic fear of the nation going to war or violating his personal pacifist positions.

Wilson's response to the *Lusitania* was to send an official note of protest to the German government which emphasized American rights on the seas.¹⁷ On May 14, Capper responded to Wilson's note after inquiries via telegram from both the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Examiner*, to which he sent the same response:

The country will fully approve both the substance of the president's firm and powerful note to Germany and the moderation and courtesy with which the president frames it. The note is all the more impressive because of its temperate and restrained language and its spirit of friendship and of confidence in the ultimate justice and good will of the German government. Less than the president has said in this momentous deliverance to the German government would not have satisfied the sense of great grievance that is suffered in the whole submarine warfare policy of Germany's navy, and more is not required to maintain

¹⁴ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 93.

¹⁵ Chatfield, "World War I and the Liberal Pacifist in the United States," 1920. "One who advocated international cooperation for peace."

¹⁶ David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

¹⁷ Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 189-199.

America's prestige and self-respect before the world. All Americans will hope that the German government will meet the reasonable demands set forth in the note and make more drastic defensive measures unnecessary.¹⁸

Capper was pleased with Wilson's decision to send diplomatic notes to Germany, which apparently satisfied the matter of "American honor" he first raised in his response to the *Chicago Tribune* on May 10.¹⁹ As far as Capper was concerned, the matter was settled, and this held true for the majority of Americans, and in particular Kansans on the incident. President Wilson and Governor Capper were at this time in line with each other's belief of avoiding militarism and preparedness; the effect of the *Lusitania* incident on the nation changed this, because by late 1915, Wilson had begun his shift on strict neutrality and preparedness.²⁰ As discussed in the previous chapter, this was due to political considerations.²¹ Despite the fact that Capper had earlier expressed support of Wilson's response to Germany, it is clear this was not a blanket support for the president on any matter pertaining to foreign policy or preparedness.

Even before Wilson had revealed his own preparedness plan, which was the Continental Army plan, Capper voiced objections to preparedness. The *Wichita Beacon* reported on November 2, 1915, Capper's speech to the Current Topic Club, where he said, "I hope the people of Kansas will vigorously oppose the attempt of the eastern jingoes, the battleship builders and the ammunition manufacturers to stampeded [*sic*] this

¹⁸ Telegram, Arthur Capper to Chicago Examiner, 14 May 1915, Box 5, Folder 428, Arthur Capper Governor's Office Records 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.; Telegram, Arthur Capper to New York Times, 14 May 1915, Box 5, Folder 428, Arthur Capper Governor's Office Records 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

¹⁹ Capper, "Kansas and the Lusitania," *Addresses and Messages*, 1.

²⁰ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 98.

²¹ George C. Herring Jr, "James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy," *Journal of Southern History* 30, no. 4 (November, 1964): 383, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2204278> (accessed January 8, 2015).

country into a military program that prepares not for home defense but for carrying war across the seas.”²²

Capper by this point decided that those pushing for an increased military posture were going far beyond the desire of many citizens who supported moderate defense appropriations after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The justification for slight increases in the nation’s military was that it would only be required for defense. Capper made it clear that he believed the original desire of Americans for a “slight increase” had been hijacked by men who wanted to send American troops to Europe and by those wanting to earn a profit from munition sales to the belligerents. Capper openly speculated that not only were “eastern interests” behind the push for a military buildup but also that they were only pushing war hysteria in order to profit from national fear. “They know if they give the American people time to think they will never commit themselves to the policy of militarism.”²³

Given Capper’s opposition to increasing the size of the nation’s military, it should not come as a surprise that he opposed Wilson’s preparedness measures when they were announced on November 4, 1915. Capper was vague on his specific views of the Continental Army.²⁴ But his objections to Wilson’s measures were made clear in response to a letter received from W.S. Kretsinger of Emporia, Kansas, on January 26, 1916. Kretsinger was in the process of organizing the Emporia Republican Club and asked the governor to clarify his viewpoint on preparedness, so the club would not be in

²² “Capper Speaks Against Preparedness for Fight,” *Wichita Beacon*, November 2, 1915, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1927656> (accessed March 5, 2015).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ As discussed in Chapter One the “Continental Army” was the main aspect of Wilson’s military preparedness plan where a reserve force of 400,000 soldiers under the control of the federal government would be raised to replace the National Guard as the primary military reserve force.

conflict with Capper's position. Kretsinger wrote, "I am going to get the club to take the same stand that you take on this question of preparedness and I would like to have you state very briefly what you think the attitude of the people should be on this question."²⁵ The fact that Kretsinger wrote to Capper, and specifically asked his viewpoint, was indicative that in public, at least, the governor was unclear about his feelings on preparedness, after Wilson had announced his Continental Army proposal.

While Capper did not reply to the letter personally, his secretary passed along his views per his request, "Of course he [Capper] is against the Wilsonian program of preparedness for the reason that he believes it is too extravagant. The Governor is in favor of a citizen soldierly [*sic*] as against a constitutional army."²⁶ While the phrase "Continental Army" is not specifically used, it is likely that the "Constitutional Army" was in reference to this, just as the phrase "citizen soldier" was a reference to the Army National Guard.²⁷ The governor's position on the subject was that he opposed the Continental Army plan in favor of the National Guard, if the size of the nation's army had to be increased.

It was this viewpoint that Capper expressed in correspondence with U.S. Congressman Daniel R. Anthony Jr., who represented Kansas's First Congressional District and served on the Committee of Military Affairs during this time period.²⁸ In a letter dated February 1, 1916, in response to a letter on the preparedness question handed to him by General Charles I. Martin of the Kansas National Guard on the governor's

²⁵ Letter, W.S. Kretsinger to Arthur Capper, 24 January 1916, Box 7, Folder 54, Arthur Capper Governor's Office Records 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

²⁶ Letter, Secretary to the Governor to W.S. Kretsinger, 26 January 1916, Box 7, Folder 54, Arthur Capper Governor's Office 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ D.R. Anthony, Jr. was the son of Daniel Read Anthony, noted abolitionist and publisher of the *Leavenworth Times*. He was also the nephew of suffragist Susan B. Anthony.

behalf, Congressman Anthony wrote to Capper, “I have carefully noted your views on military legislation and I am in sympathy with your suggestion that the National Guard be strengthened and encouraged by congress, instead of carrying out the plan proposed for a new continental army.”²⁹

An increase of the number of soldiers in the Kansas National Guard was in line with Capper’s sense of localism, which he had campaigned on in 1914.³⁰ The Kansas National Guard at this time was in an excellent position to be strengthened, in no small part because of the efforts of General Martin, who was Kansas Adjutant General. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Kansas National Guard was below its allotted strength during a time when the National Guard was criticized as unprofessional by regular military officers.³¹ Despite this, Martin had instituted some measures of professionalism, most notably having National Guard officers selected by a military board rather than being elected by their men, as well as implementing the reforms of the Dick Act of 1903. By adopting those measures, the Kansas National Guard was brought into conformity with the regular U.S. Army.³²

Anthony’s reply to Capper came the day before Wilson arrived in Kansas on February 2, 1916, during his preparedness tour, designed to sell the Continental Army proposal to the skeptical public in the Midwest.³³ While Wilson had had some mild

²⁹ Letter, D.R. Anthony Jr. to Arthur Capper, 1 February 1916, Box 7, Folder 110, Arthur Capper Governor’s Office 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

³⁰ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 87.

³¹ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 86.

³² Brian Dexter Fowles, *A Guard in Peace and War: The History of the Kansas National Guard, 1854-1987*, (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1989), 53. Formally known as The Militia Act of 1903, the Dick Act was introduced by Representative Charles Dick of Ohio and provided circumstances in which National Guard units could be federalized, provided federal funds for training purposes, and required that each state’s National Guard organize its units in the same way as the regular Army.

³³ George C. Herring Jr, “James Hay and the Preparedness Controversy,” *Journal of Southern History* 30, no. 4 (November, 1964): 390, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2204278> (accessed January 8, 2015).

success in touting his preparedness program in the urban Midwest, he utterly failed with the farmers' bloc.³⁴ This was particularly true during his brief stay in Topeka, evidenced by Capper's introduction of Wilson at the City Auditorium:

Many of us are not in accord with the program of vast armament, with all its hazardous consequences, and the theory of a chance or a possible foe. But we welcome the fullest discussion, and we feel the deepest respect and sympathy for the head of the nation in this grave hour. We sincerely desire to avoid embarrassing him; we earnestly wish to do all we can to help a policy that shall result in the greatest good to our people and to the rest of the world. . . . Kansans are a peace-loving people. We maintain an efficient National Guard which ranks well with the militia of other states, but for thirty-one years that guard has not been called to active service—a longer period of freedom from riot and turmoil than any other state has experienced.³⁵

In introducing Wilson, Capper was polite but also made himself clear concerning the Kansas position on preparedness. A fact made evident by Capper's mention of Kansans' pride in their National Guard. When taking into account Wilson's purpose of coming to the Sunflower State was to convince skeptics of the need for preparedness and creating the "Continental Army," which would sideline the National Guard, Capper's subtle hint to Wilson was designed to let the president know that his proposal was not viewed favorably in Kansas.

Socolofsky theorized that Capper may have been influenced by a letter he had received from Oswald Garrison Villard. Villard believed Wilson had been successful in convincing the citizens of Cleveland, Ohio of the need for preparedness. Despite Wilson's best efforts, Kansas remained firm in opposing Wilson's national defense proposals. While the president was treated with the courtesy befitting the office, it was

³⁴ John Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1972), 128.

³⁵ Arthur Capper, *Addresses and Messages*, "Kansas and Preparedness," (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 7.

clear he had not been as successful as he had been in Ohio.³⁶ Capper, at this point, was still firmly in the camp of believing that an increase in the size of the U.S. Army was an indication of the president's intentions of intervening in the European conflict.

Hosting Wilson was the last effort Capper gave to the issue of preparedness in 1916, and by extension, to the war in Europe. Instead, the governor spent the remainder of the year focusing on the domestic affairs of Kansas and his own re-election campaign. While Capper easily won re-election in 1916, Kansas went for Wilson.³⁷ According to the *Alma Signal*, Capper carried 103 out of the 105 counties in Kansas, only losing Decatur and Ford counties with a final triumph of 95,115 votes over his opponent W.S. Lansdon of the Democratic Party. Wilson, on the other hand, carried Kansas by 28,995 votes over his Republican challenger, the former Supreme Court Justice, Charles Evan Hughes.³⁸

The *Alma Signal*, ascribed Wilson's victory in Kansas to the "farmers' vote." War was an economic boon to Kansas farmers because their produce was made very profitable by selling to European markets, particularly wheat, which was selling for \$1.75 per bushel, and farmers attributed that to Wilson. As a result, many farmers crossed party lines to cast their ballots for the president.³⁹ This was in addition to Wilson's progressive positions that were attractive to many Midwestern progressive Republicans, especially his popular campaign slogan, "He kept us out of war," which Charles Evan Hughes failed to grasp.⁴⁰

³⁶ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 94. Villard was editor of the *New York Evening Post* and helped found the Anti-Imperialist League.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁸ "Kansas Conceded to the President," *Alma Signal*, November 16, 1916, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/95986662/> (accessed April 16, 2015).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White*, ed. Sally Foreman Griffith (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1973), 277.

Capper's policy of ignoring national issues for most of 1916 became an impediment for him in the Republican Party. The *Independence Daily Reporter* reported that GOP leaders in Topeka were suspicious that Capper was secretly an advocate of Wilson. Republican elders in Topeka personally blamed him for Wilson's victory, even forwarding to Capper a package labeled "Responsibility for Hughes's Defeat." This conclusion was reached because of Capper's campaign tactics, which stressed non-partisanship during the 1916 campaign. In particular, Republican leaders charged that Capper had been "lukewarm" in support for Hughes and that he had failed to mention him adequately during his re-election campaign appearances. The party leadership believed Capper's lack of enthusiastic campaigning for Hughes was a factor in his defeat in Kansas.⁴¹

At the end of 1916, Capper had still managed to avoid national issues, especially ignoring the debate over the National Defense Act. While he was criticized openly by his own party, and personally blamed for Hughes's defeat, there was no evidence that Capper secretly worked for Wilson's re-election; however, there was a residual antagonism directed at Capper, even claiming that Capper did an "about face" by moving closer to Wilson's position on preparedness in early 1917.⁴² As Capper began his second term as Kansas governor, the effects of the war in Europe were reaching a point where he could no longer ignore the conflict.

Capper's second inaugural address on January 8, 1915, contained many of the same elements that marked his first inaugural, with one important exception. Although

⁴¹ "Capper for Wilson?" *Independence Daily Reporter*, November 9, 1916, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1961710> (accessed March 10, 2015).

⁴² Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 99.

Capper spent considerable time focusing on domestic concerns, he also felt it was necessary to include the war in Europe. In addition to giving a tacit endorsement of former President William Howard Taft's plan for the League to Enforce Peace once the war was over,⁴³ Capper told his fellow Kansans, "America—Kansas—has no higher duty than to join with the sober thinking men of all nations, in a world-wide movement to make future wars impossible. It may not come within the province of your state government to participate officially in this movement, but as your governor I appeal to you to join actively in the movement."⁴⁴

With this statement, Capper demonstrated that he would no longer ignore the conflict, as he had preferred to do during his first term. As Socolofsky noted, the reason for Capper's change in tone between his first and second inaugural addresses was that by late 1916, it was increasingly obvious that the nation was heading towards war with Germany. Rather than continue to ignore the new reality, Capper pushed for Kansans to "lead in peace."⁴⁵

The shift in American attitude was due to the renewed policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. Following the *Lusitania* tragedy on May 7, 1915, Germany had promised to end this policy. Unfortunately, Germany's military chiefs had decided on January 9, 1917, to resume the practice in an effort to starve England into defeat, despite the gamble of drawing the United States into the war.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid., 95

⁴⁴ Arthur Capper, "Second Inaugural," *Addresses and Messages*, (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 222.

⁴⁵ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 97.

⁴⁶ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 5.

Wilson's initial response to Germany's renewed unrestricted submarine campaign, which took effect on February 4, 1917, was to sever diplomatic relations, making good on the threat in his previous diplomatic notes to Germany. A month later, Wilson requested the authority from Congress to arm merchant vessels in the Atlantic carrying supplies to the Allies. Still, Wilson resisted calls urging him to ask Congress for a declaration of war, which continued through his second inaugural on March 5, 1917, despite the fact the United States was already indirectly involved in the conflict.⁴⁷ As Wilson told the nation, "The tragical events of the thirty months of vital turmoil through which we have just passed have made us citizens of the world. There can be no turning back. Our own fortunes as a nation are involved, whether we would have it so or not."⁴⁸

As Socolofsky postulates, Capper approved of Wilson's severing of diplomatic ties, but still hoped actual war could be avoided. Capper was criticized for this attitude by at least one national newspaper, which claimed Capper's pacifist attitudes did not represent the majority of Kansans.⁴⁹ Capper believed this attack was not justified. Despite being a recognized pacifist, Capper had never given any indication that he would not support Wilson on matters of war or peace, if those matters became official American policy. His public support of Wilson after the *Lusitania* incident being one example.

Capper's frame of mind was further demonstrated in a speech he delivered to the Methodist Conference held in Topeka on March 24, 1917. Before the assembled Methodists, Capper reiterated how his Quaker background had taught him to dislike war

⁴⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁸ "Wilson's Address," *Hutchinson News*, March 5, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/1051132> (accessed March 29, 2015).

⁴⁹ Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper*, 98.

for its uncivilized nature. Capper also maintained that despite all of this, war at times was necessary when all “reasonable” measures had failed:

I have talked against because I considered it a wrong against the masses of the people who do the fighting and who must stand the brunt of battle and make the sacrifices. War is a senseless, irrational way to settle difficulties between nations. It is not to be undertaken until all reasonable means have failed. But the ruthless conduct of the German Kaiser in deliberately sinking American vessels, in taking the lives of American citizens in disregard of the rights of humanity, is so unjustifiable, so indefensible, so criminal, that all patriotic citizens feel our government can no longer condone it without loss of self-respect for life and liberty that is dearer than life itself....

Kansans abhor war. They have been and will continue to be staunch advocates of peace. But first of all we are loyal Americans, and I know that irrespective of birthplace, and regardless of party affiliations or of political creeds, we will uphold the President in this crisis and give loyal support to the government at Washington.⁵⁰

While Capper had not completely dropped his pacifist ideals, he was prepared to push them aside in the name of patriotism, and willing to “stand by the president” if Wilson took the nation to war in order to end Germany’s tyranny upon the world. Capper was not advocating for the nation go to war. Capper believed Kansans should support Wilson and the decisions he made during this delicate period with Germany, regardless of what path those decisions took the nation down, including war. In other words, Capper advocated for the nation to trust and follow President Wilson. Capper’s position was very similar to his stance following the aftermath of the *Lusitania* sinking.

Initially, Capper preferred to avoid war, but firmly established himself as an elected official who would support the president in the event war was declared and thus shifted away from his long-held pacifism. Once Congress declared war on April 6, 1917, the debate in Capper’s mind was over; now the nation faced a new crisis, raising an army

⁵⁰ “Kansas Behind the President says Gov. Capper, “*Topeka Daily Capital*, March 25, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/63265661/> (accessed April 30, 2015).

though volunteerism or conscription. The legislation that initially encompassed the Selective Service Act of 1917 was opposed by Capper, because he favored an all-volunteer army. Given Capper's previous opposition to Wilson's Continental Army plan, this was not surprising, as the plan had the aura of conscription about it.

Capper made his preference for a volunteer army abundantly clear during an April 10 address at the Woodman of the World convention in Pittsburg, Kansas, which appeared in the *Topeka Daily Capital*. At the convention, Capper emphasized his reasons for opposition to conscription. The first and foremost was that conscription was an insult to the memories of the Kansans who had volunteered during the Civil War and the border conflict with Missouri. Capper saw no reason why Kansas could not raise "50,000" volunteers without resorting to a draft: "The one thing, I discover, of which these fine young fellows are proudest is that their fathers served the country in their day not because they had to but because they wanted to. They have always heard that to be drafted is to be disgraced."⁵¹

At the time there were only two likely examples of conscription which Capper drew upon to justify his position: the first was the Civil War draft, which was not particularly popular, and the second was the Imperial German Army. Capper saw the Imperial Germany Army with its conscripted soldiers as undemocratic and a symbol of German militarism, a view shared by many of his fellow Americans.⁵² Capper was troubled by those who admired the organization of the German Army. He wrote, "I fear our professional military men at Washington have let themselves be carried away by an

⁵¹ "Draft is not Needed to make Kansans Fight," *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 11, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/63266312/?> (accessed March 30, 2015).

⁵² Kennedy, *Over Here*, 145.

admiration for the Prussian system, which turns out machine-made soldiers. I am one who believes that the best fighting men are never drafted. I would only conscript wealth in wartime. Drafting an army is a last resort. It is not the way to begin a war.”⁵³

Both of these examples illustrated why Capper was weary of relying upon a drafted army. He associated conscription with being coerced into service, and if you were coerced into fighting, your best effort would not be put forth. Capper did not address the need to control the labor pool at that time.

Capper was certainly not alone in Kansas in preferring to rely on volunteerism. Just as before when he expressed opposition to preparedness and the Continental Army, Capper believed he was voicing the opinion of the majority of Kansans. This was certainly the case with C. E. Corey, who wrote an open letter to the governor, which was published in the *Fort Scott Tribune and the Fort Scott Monitor*, one day after Capper had made his address in Pittsburg opposing conscription:

About this selective conscription business—President Wilson probably knows his business, and we’re with him whether he does or not. But your suggestion that you do not want a draft in Kansas hits me. It is one of the Kansas things that we are all proud of that Kansas never needed a draft to get soldiers. Why, I confidently believe that we could fill the Kansas quota with good husky corn-fed girls, perfectly confident and glad to go, if their sex did not prevent. For the honor of Kansas, try to prevail on the president to let you furnish volunteers and thus keep up our record.⁵⁴

C.E. Corey, much like Capper, associated the draft as a sign that a soldier was unpatriotic. Even more important, it was feared that Kansas as a whole would be stigmatized if opposition to conscription was not expressed.

⁵³ “Draft is not Needed to make Kansans Fight,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 11, 1917.

⁵⁴ “Kansas’ll Furnish ‘Em,” *Fort Scott Tribune and the Fort Scott Monitor*, April 11, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1714731> (accessed February 4, 2015).

Despite the prevailing viewpoint in Kansas of preferring volunteerism over a draft, Capper's opposition to Selective Service legislation was short lived. Less than two weeks after delivering his speech at the Woodman of the World Convention criticizing conscription, the governor was in communication with Secretary of War Newton Baker on preparing the state's first draft registration. Capper's communications with the War Department during the time leading up to Registration Day were printed by the Kansas Adjutant General's office in their *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*. In a letter received on April 23, 1917, Secretary of War Baker divulged to Capper that although the Selective Service Act had not yet become official, it was going to pass Congress in some form:

The President desires that I bring to your attention the following considerations which he is not at present ready to give to the press: Pending legislation contemplates the calling to colors a sufficient number of young men to provide for [the] common defense. It will be apparent to you that no steps can be taken toward the actual mustering of the selected army until, in the form of a registration of all males of designated age, there has been completed a most comprehensive census of our resources of men. Notwithstanding differences of opinion that may exist as to the other features of this legislation, no voice has yet contested the necessity for such an enrollment; and we may confidently assume that the law will carry a provision requiring all such person to present themselves for registration at a day and place to be named by presidential proclamation, under pain of penalty for failure to do so...⁵⁵

A matter of particular importance occurred when Baker divulged to Capper the problems with the draft during the Civil War, which were discussed in Chapter One:

Intrinsic in the problem that confronted Congress in 1863 was the necessity for creating a complete Federal instrumentality for effecting the registration. The States, unhappily, were not at one in bearing out the Nation in this. When we afford ourselves the satisfaction of saying that this condition no longer subsists,

⁵⁵ Letter, Secretary of War to Governor Arthur Capper, 23 April 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, "Selective Service," (Topeka, 1919), 129. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

then we put the chief impediment to swift action out of our reckoning...they promise the swiftest and the most effective possible execution of the law.⁵⁶

In other words, Baker and the War Department had decided that the main reason the Civil War draft was unsuccessful was because the federal government had attempted to administer it themselves, rather than going to state agencies controlled by citizens-at-large, which were believed to be more conducive than the previous Civil War model. In writing to Capper, Baker wanted the governor to understand just how necessary his cooperation was in organizing an efficient and well-trained fighting force from the ground up.

The rest of Baker's telegram informed Capper on how the draft registration was to be organized, which was also discussed in Chapter One. Baker wanted Capper to understand that the county sheriff, clerk, and physician were to serve as the executive board for the registration in each county or cities with large enough populations. In addition, Baker wanted Capper to understand the plan to utilize the existing voting structure in mobilizing the draft registration.⁵⁷

Coupled with informing Capper of the current plan for registration under the Selective Service Act, Baker also had to gauge Capper's feeling on the fact the United States was going to enact a military draft. Baker could not have been completely dissatisfied with Capper's initial reaction, especially because Capper had originally opposed the war, military preparedness, and more recently, conscription itself. On April 26, Capper provided his response to Baker's letter of April 23: "I desire to say that if the proposed selective conscription bill is enacted I shall be glad to co-operate most fully

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 130-132.

with the War Department in raising Kansas troops. Kansas can be depended upon to do her full share in the prosecution of the war. I have noted most carefully the plan as outlined in your letter and feel sure that Kansas can adopt it with but few modifications....”⁵⁸

Consequently, Capper had pledged his support to implement the draft even while debate raged in Congress. The only substantial objection he raised with Baker was not over the draft, but rather its reliance on county officials in the registration process:

There is some doubt in my mind whether your plan of drafting will meet with favor by members of the county board, and confidentially, it may be difficult to enforce that most important duty. A sheriff or county clerk or any other county officer will shrink from the responsibility of saying which boy shall go to war and which one shall stay at home. Many of them may refuse to do the service unless the law makes it absolutely mandatory and fixes a punishment for failure or refusal to act. The work is fraught with so many complexities that no matter how patriotic they may be, county officers will evade it if they can....⁵⁹

Capper was not confident that county officers would put their duties as registration officials above their personal feelings and loyalty to the community. To minimize those officials, Capper recommended the following to Baker, “If the drafting cannot be done by regular army officers, then in justice to the county officers, who must do it, the law or regulations should be made so plain and stringent as to protect them in the performance of such a duty.”⁶⁰

Because the Selective Service Act of 1917 was designed to prevent federal officers from operating it, there was no chance of the U.S. Army playing any role in the registration process. Capper emphasized to Baker that the law should be worded in such a

⁵⁸Letter, Governor Capper to Secretary of War Baker, 26 April 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 133. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

way that there was no chance of the county officers being criticized by their locality during the course of their duties, and to ensure that legal consequences quelled any personal feelings in the registration process the county officers might hold.

Baker responded to Capper in an April 30 telegram, which confirmed the organization of the draft registration:

Bill has passed both houses and will go to conference on minor points of difference today, the form in which bill passed enables me to confirm to you the plan outlined in my letter of the twenty third instant to have one registration board for each county composed of local officials as far as practicable, local officials to compose boards in each state to be named by Governor thereof, bear in mind that exemptions will not be determined at time of registration but will be deferred until a later date.⁶¹

Two items are noteworthy about this telegram: the first is that it was the governors of each state who were to bear responsibility for the draft registration boards, further indicating the extent to which the federal government wanted to tie conscription to localism. The second demonstrated, even at this early date, the War Department was formalizing policies to deal with the critical issue of exemptions. Capper's immediate action after receiving Baker's communication was to have form letters mailed to the sheriffs of all 105 counties and the mayors of Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita, the three largest cities in Kansas that constituted their own registration districts. The letters were mailed through the Kansas Adjutant General office.⁶²

The form letter to the sheriffs outlined the responsibilities of the registration boards and suggested preliminary steps that registration officials in each county should

⁶¹ Telegram, Secretary of War to Governor Arthur Capper, 30 April 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, "Selective Service," (Topeka, 1919), 134. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁶² Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations* "Selective Service," (Topeka, 1919), 134-135, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

take to ensure maximum readiness on Registration Day. It was stressed to county officials that they were to organize the mechanisms of the draft by finding volunteers to man the registration desks in each polling precinct of the districts. They could not, however, set the mechanism into motion until President Wilson issued the actual draft registration proclamation, at which point the “blanks,” which were the registration forms, were to be mailed to the registration officials.⁶³ “Of course, nothing official can be done until the President issues his proclamation and you are further advised, but the information in this letter will enable you to have the matter rounded up so you can act promptly when the times comes.”⁶⁴

Even before the Selective Service Act was passed, Capper did not hide his cooperation with the War Department. In the *Topeka Daily Capital*, on May 1, 1917, Capper published in full the letter he had sent to the 105 county sheriffs the previous day, and informed readers of the general outline of how draft registration operated.⁶⁵

If there were any lingering doubts about Capper’s personal feelings on the war or conscription by officials of the Wilson Administration, these steps should have been proof that he had put aside his personal feelings and performed the duties expected of him as an elected official during a time of war. Despite the fact that Capper was a member of the opposition party, he had delivered on his commitment to “stand by the president,” just as promised on March 24 at the Methodist Conference.⁶⁶

⁶³ Letter, office of adjutant general to county sheriffs, 30 April 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 135. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶⁵ “Kansas Prepares to Select Army,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 1, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1730894> (accessed February 2, 2015).

⁶⁶ “Kansas Behind the President says Gov. Capper,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 25, 1917.

The Selective Service Act of 1917 was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Wilson on May 18, at which point, Capper received an official telegram from Baker:

Number one. First. The selective service law has been approved and the presidents proclamation issues this date May 18th. They require all male persons between the ages of twenty one and thirty both inclusive, except certain persons in the military and naval services of the United States, to present themselves for registration between the hours of seven A.M. and nine P.M. on Tuesday June 5, 1917. In the precincts wherein they have their permanent homes.⁶⁷

Now that the draft proclamation had been issued by the president, the draft registration machinery could be put into operation.

The “machinery” officially commenced on May 19, when Capper sent telegrams to all county sheriffs in Kansas informing them that Registration Day was officially set for June 5, 1917. Although the composition of the draft boards was widely known, Capper had yet to officially appoint the officers in each county, because he lacked the authority to do so until the Selective Service Act became law. He did so in the following telegram: “In accordance with said law and by direction of [the] President I have this day appointed the sheriff comma the county clerk comma and the doctor comma as members of registration boards for your county period....”⁶⁸

Capper also wanted to make certain that all the positions required for the registration process were actually filled and that a sufficient number of registrars was available. This was critical because while the county officers were the chief

⁶⁷ Telegram, Secretary of War to Governor Capper, 18 May 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations* “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 138. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁶⁸ Telegram, Governor Capper to county sheriffs, 19 May 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 140. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

administrators of registration within their respective districts, the registrars actually staffed the registration desks, filling out the registration forms in each precinct. He further informed the sheriffs of each county in his telegrams:

Your board is directed immediately to select suitable persons as registrars in each voting precinct in your county and arrange for suitable places for such registration period Paragraph four period Your board is hereby required to complete appointment of precinct registrars and selected registration places and determine whether you have an ample supply of blank forms and you will report on all three to the Governor on or before May twenty-fourth comma nineteen hundred and seventeen period.⁶⁹

There were two primary justifications for this urgency by Capper on the matter of registrars. The first was that the draft registration needed to be conducted on a single day, so having a sufficient number of registrars for each precinct was required for the success of the process. The War Department estimated that it took at least one registrar per eighty men.⁷⁰ The second was that Capper had been instructed to report back to the War Department on the condition of Kansas registration boards.⁷¹

In the case of the readying for the draft registration, Kansans took the process sincerely early in the process. In the weeks prior to registration, the registration boards had made *tentative* appointments of registrars. On May 19, one day after the Selective Service Act became law, Capper sent the following telegram to Provost Marshal General Enoch Crowder, “Your telegram of instructions received. All County registration Boards appointed and directed to report to this office, preparations made for precinct registration, selection of registration places, and supply of blank forms. Arthur Capper, Governor.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Telegram, Secretary of War to Governor Capper, 18 May 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” 140.

⁷² Telegram, Governor Capper to Provost Marshal General, 19 May 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 142. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

Thus, by the foresight of state officials, Registration Day could have been held earlier if needed.⁷³

One issue that still worried the War Department was the potential for civil disturbances as a way to protest the draft. Crowder wired the following telegram to Capper on May 31:

Number three hundred Sixty five. Advices received here indicate sporadic and widely scattered instances of activities of anti-registration influences. The Secretary of War would appreciate your advice in this matter and he desires to be informed whether you apprehend any omission of registration officials to act or resistance to registration in any part of your state or any occasion for the use of troops. Please regard this communication as confidential. I will so regard your reply. Crowder.⁷⁴

Even after measures were taken to ensure that the public saw their local communities, and not the federal government, as the face of the draft, there remained lingering anxiety about Civil War-style draft riots at registration locations.

Capper exhibited no apprehensions about public disturbances on Registration Day or about the loyalty of Kansas registration officials. In responding to Crowder in an undated telegram, Capper wrote, “No serious anti-registration demonstration apparent at this time. Loyalty of registration officials selected can be depended upon. No occasion for troops.”⁷⁵

In hindsight the War Department’s anxieties were overblown, as only one county sheriff, C.D. Ladner of Pottawatomie County, Kansas indicated that he would not fulfill

⁷³ Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” 142.

⁷⁴ Telegram, Provost Marshal General to Governor Capper, 31 May 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations* “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 142. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁷⁵ Telegram, Governor Capper to Provost Marshal General, undated, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 142. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

his responsibilities, but this was not evident until July 1917 after Registration Day had passed. Ladner thought he should be paid for having to perform registration services, rather than offer his time voluntarily, as registration officers and registrars were obliged to do in the name of patriotism. The *Galena Weekly Republican*, published a letter from Sheriff Ladner in which he claimed, “I am not going to volunteer my services on [the] Registration Board as you are getting paid for your services and also Mr. President [sic] Wilson, [is] geting [sic] paid for his services.”⁷⁶

Residents of Pottawatomie County circulated a petition asking Capper to suspend Ladner’s pay [for his duties as sheriff] while he worked on the county registration board. Capper responded by proclaiming that he would “take immediate action” and that it would be wise if Ladner began looking for another job. The matter resolved itself in August 1917, when Capper accepted Ladner’s resignation.⁷⁷ Ladner was a fluke; overall Kansas did not have a problem with the loyalty of draft board officials.

The Wilson Administration had adopted the method of patriotism over coercion to compel draft registration. In order to facilitate enrollment, the administration strongly encouraged the governors of the 48 states to take action in order to ensure June 5, 1917, was a day to embrace patriotism during the registration process.⁷⁸

Capper was not immune to this strategy of creating a climate of patriotic fervor. Consequently, he formally proclaimed June 5 a public holiday in Kansas. According to the *Concordia Daily Blade*, this was to be a day of “patriotism and prayer.” To facilitate

⁷⁶ “Ladner Wants Pay For Everything He Does,” *Galena Weekly Republican*, July, 27, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2267553> (accessed April 22, 2015).

⁷⁷ “Ladner Resigns Draft Board,” *Alma Signal*, August 2, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2267619> (accessed April 22, 2015).

⁷⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 150.

this, Capper proclaimed that all business in the state should cease in order to, “hold public meetings everywhere as a patriotic observance,” as a way to show support for registration.⁷⁹ Capper reminded Kansans that they may have reluctantly supported entering the war, but now was the time to do their duty as loyal citizens in responding to the national call to arms, even if they were not subject to the draft. It was also their duty as loyal Kansans to contribute to the war effort in any way they could:

The great war [*sic*] will be won, not by men alone--money, munitions and provender are also prime requisites. The people of Kansas will contribute their full share of all these things and I urge that registration day be made also a day of popular subscription to the Liberty Loan and that we show the Nation that the people of Kansas are willing and glad to contribute from their bounty to the sustenance of our armies and the support of our allies across the sea.⁸⁰

In issuing the Registration Day holiday proclamation, Capper came full circle from his initial opposition when he entered office in 1915. The argument could be made that he had no choice as an elected official but to support Wilson’s policies. While this was certainly true, Capper did not see himself as being coerced into supporting a policy he opposed. He honestly believed that foreign policy was the domain of the president and as a loyal citizen and public servant, he was obligated to support the president’s policy.

Registration Day occurred on June 5 nationally without any major disturbances, despite the fears of similar incidents that happened during the Civil War. As the *McPherson Daily Republican* declared, “The stories that in the Civil War some people had to be driven to the drafting places with the bayonets are not to be said of the present young generation who are ready to enter a war yet to be named.”⁸¹ Both patriotism and

⁷⁹ “June 5 a Public Holiday in Kansas,” *Concordia Daily Blade*, May 21, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2343794> (accessed April 20, 2015).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* The Liberty Loan program which funded the war effort will not be discussed further.

⁸¹ “Those Reports are Complex,” *McPherson Daily Republican*, June 7, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1729291> (accessed February 6, 2015).

the bully pulpit, as well as the decentralized format of draft registration, worked remarkably well in quelling dissent. If the success of draft registration was being measured by a lack of disturbances, then in Kansas it was a remarkable achievement, proving that Capper was correct when he had informed Crowder that he did not anticipate any “anti-registration” demonstrations in the state.⁸²

In other measures, however, it could be interpreted as a failure, such as examining the raw numbers of registrations in Kansas. Those figures indicated that registration fell below expectations. The *Evening Star*, reported on June 6, one day after registration, that the federal government had projected that there were 180,183 men in Kansas within the appropriate age limits of the draft. Nonetheless, it was estimated, even with incomplete returns, Kansas fell between fifteen and eighteen thousand men short of projections.⁸³

In hindsight, the shortfall turned out to be correct, with the exception that it was greater than originally anticipated. After the war, the office of the Kansas Adjutant General compiled the information from all of the registration boards, and found that there were in actuality 150,972 men who had registered on June 5.⁸⁴ This was 29,211 men short of the projection of 180,183 men. Of the men who registered on June 5, there were 6,439 inducted into army service under call numbers for the first draft in 1917.⁸⁵ The rest of Kansas’s quota of 17,764 soldiers was met by men who had previously enlisted in the

⁸² Telegram, Governor Capper to Provost Marshal General, undated, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Selective Service,” 142.

⁸³ “Kansas Below Estimates,” *Evening Star*, June 6, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2041615> (accessed March 22, 2015).

⁸⁴ Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, “Registrations and Inductions,” (Topeka, 1919), 47. Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

National Guard prior to April 1, or who had volunteered for either the National Guard or Regular Army after April 2, 1917.⁸⁶

With the nation's first military draft since the Civil War, Governor Capper put the state on a war footing. Despite the actual shortfall of anticipated registrants, the registration itself was conducted with no major disturbances as was feared by federal officials. Although Capper had no direct influence on Selective Service once adopted, he had claimed victory in a state that President Wilson had carried in 1916. It was obvious to the observer that Capper's cooperation was critical to whether or not the draft was accepted by a majority of Kansans. Capper was the official face of Kansas and its citizens trusted his example of putting aside reservations about the draft once the nation was at war. Without Capper's calm demeanor, the process clearly would have been more difficult than necessary.

The citizen's trust in Capper was especially evident with farmers, who saw Capper as an official who would listen to their concerns over potential food scarcities resulting from farm-labor shortages they feared the draft might cause. As the draft began to take effect, Capper was equally concerned about the shortage of farmers who were responsible for increasing the nation's food production. The concern over farm labor, particularly among the wheat growers of the state, was a situation Capper was consumed with for the rest of 1917. Before Capper's concerns over the draft and wheat production can be discussed, it is necessary to examine why wheat was such a valuable commodity

⁸⁶ Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations*, "Selective Service," 153.

to the Allies and the amounts Kansas produced before the United States entered the war in April 1917.

CHAPTER THREE
THE WHEAT CRISIS

In writing the preface to the *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, J.C. Mohler, secretary of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, described Kansas's overall production of wheat as the state's chief agricultural achievement during the war years 1914-18. Wheat was not the only grain produced in Kansas; corn, oats, barley, and rye were also grown during the war years. But wheat was by far the most important grain crop harvested in the state during the war and was significant in providing food for the world.¹

According to historian Avner Offer, writing in *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*, wheat, rye, barley, maize, millet, and oats were the basis of human consumption in Europe and North America, with wheat and rye constituting the primary bread cereal crops. Offer claimed that no other food was "so suited to be the staff of life" because wheat could replace "other foods" as a source of energy and protein. "Other foods" were not adequate replacements for wheat.² This is because a single grain of wheat contains two-thirds starch and 10-15 percent protein, along with essential vitamins the human body needs. The human body, if it must, can survive almost entirely on wheat alone, with a few "minor additions" to the diet.³

¹ Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, "Preface," (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1919), ix.

² Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 84.

³ Ibid.

The only crop that came close to replacing wheat as a source of energy during World War I was the potato. Potatoes were cheaper to grow than any grain and provided the necessary energy for the human body, but unlike wheat, potatoes did not contain the necessary percentages of proteins or fats that the human body also required for survival. Although wheat was more expensive to grow than potatoes, the cost of shipping wheat from the United States to Europe during World War I was far cheaper. Wheat could be concentrated and moved in large quantities, while potatoes required a larger area within a vessel.⁴

All of this held true during peacetime; however, as J.C. Mohler said, “in times of war the consequence of wheat is emphasized because of its peculiar importance from a military point of view.”⁵ In layman’s terms, this meant that during the war the demand for wheat increased because a large number of people could be fed with this one type of grain. Mohler went so far as to claim that wheat was the “deciding factor” in the war.⁶ The Allies relied on the United States as a source of wheat before America entered the war in April 1917, and Kansas produced large amounts of wheat that contributed to the total United States production of the grain.

In the approximately three-year period, 1914-1917, that the European powers were engaged in war before America entered the conflict; the United States still played a major role in the struggle. It was not on the battlefield or by supplying arms and munitions as expected during a war, but by supplying the Allies with wheat and other food stuffs to feed their armies and civilian populations. It was a role Americans

⁴ Ibid., 84-85.

⁵ *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, “Preface,” ix.

⁶ Ibid.

willingly embraced as evidenced by an article published in the *Evening Herald* in October 1914, shortly after the war's outbreak. The article brought to light the question of "bread" and how if the war lasted longer than planned, combatants would confront major difficulties in feeding their populations:

Germany raises sixty percent of her wheat.
France raises ninety percent of her wheat.
England imports 80 percent of her wheat.
Russia exports wheat in very large amounts.⁷

Two items are clear of the Allies: England, by far, was the largest importer of wheat and Russia was the largest exporter. With this in mind, England and Russia will be the primary focus of this section of the chapter. In the following examination, the reader will discover why the United States became the Allies' principal wheat provider during the war years.

Historian Witold S. Sworakowski, in his essay, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," published in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and its Aftermath 1914-23*, explained the wheat supply situation in Europe prior to the outbreak of war in 1914. The chief impediment for the Allies was transportation difficulties, not a lack of wheat being grown and harvested. In the pre-war period, Russia was the major wheat exporter to Western Europe, but with the outbreak of the conflict, the Ottoman Turks closed the straits or waterways, which cut the traditional European supply chain used for shipping Russian grain. Germany was a beneficiary of the blockade of Russian exports by sea because less wheat to their enemies increased Germany's chances of victory. At the same time, Russia could not export their wheat by rail either, as the

⁷ "The Lack of Bread," *Evening Herald*, October 6, 1914, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/93019382/> (accessed August 16, 2015).

shipments would have to travel through Germany to do so. Smaller wheat-producing nations were also affected by the Turkish blockade, such as Romania, which by 1916, was overrun by the Central Powers, diminishing any hope of the Allies receiving her wheat.⁸

The impact the war had on Russian wheat exports was shown in the *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916*. Prior to the war, in 1913, Russia exported 122,336,000 bushels of wheat, primarily to Western Europe. This was reduced to only an estimated 88,609,000 bushels exported in 1914, the year the war commenced. A year later, in 1915, a preliminary estimate showed that only 6,681,000 bushels were exported.⁹ For all intents and purposes, Russian wheat played no effective role in the Allied food effort. If the Allies were going to survive, it was crucial to find another grain supplier; especially for Great Britain.

In addition to the Allies having lost Russia as a source of grain, another crucial factor impeded the English wheat effort: their lack of skilled farm labor. During 1914 and 1915, a large number of farm laborers had enlisted in the British Army, which resulted in the loss of so many skilled farm workers that British agriculture was seriously curtailed.¹⁰ The problem became so acute that in 1916, Britain adopted a military draft in part so they could allocate proper distribution of labor between the needs of the army and the nation's farms.¹¹

⁸ Witold S. Sworakowski, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and its Aftermath 1914-23*, ed. Lawrence S. Gelfand (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa, 1974), 44-45. Future president Herbert Hoover served as head of the U.S. Food Administration during World War I.

⁹ United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 25, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 579. <https://ia600706.us.archive.org/24/items/yoa1916/yoa1916.pdf> (accessed July 30, 2015).

¹⁰ Sworakowski, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," 44.

¹¹ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 88.

Apart from a lack of skilled farm labor, historians Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, in their collaborative work *Twentieth Century Populism*, brought to light another factor working against Great Britain in producing its own wheat, which made its reliance on American producers inevitable. This was the fact that most of the British economy was geared towards manufacturing rather than agriculture. Great Britain had been the largest importer of grain in Europe long before war broke out in 1914.¹² For instance, in 1913, the British imported 196,809,000 bushels of wheat from wheat-exporting nations, such as Russia, while France only imported 57,160,000 bushels.¹³

Out of the total land acreage the British had dedicated to agriculture, Saloutos and Hicks believed that only about three percent of it was useful for growing any type of bread grains, with most of it being used for livestock pasture.¹⁴ In 1914, the United Kingdom had 1,905,000 acres dedicated to wheat production, which was increased to 2,335,000 acres by 1915.¹⁵ The increased acreage was only accomplished by bringing into cultivation centuries-old pasture land, and even then, the British could not double their wheat acreage, let alone expand acreage of other grains.¹⁶

These two factors were the primary reasons the British found it necessary to begin importing massive quantities of wheat from foreign sources, with the United States becoming the prime source. Sworakowski pointed out that at the beginning of the war, the British anticipated the loss of Russian wheat and turned to increased imports from

¹² Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Twentieth Century Populism*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1951), 90-91.

¹³ *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 25, 579. The table does not break down the specific amounts of wheat Great Britain and France imported from each wheat-exporting nation listed, merely the total amount of wheat they imported for the year.

¹⁴ Saloutos and Hicks, *Twentieth Century Populism*, 90-91.

¹⁵ *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 11, 568.

¹⁶ Saloutos and Hicks, *Twentieth Century Populism*, 90-91.

Australia, India, and Argentina, but these proved unreliable because of the sheer distance of transport.¹⁷

This was particularly true with Australia. The *Hutchinson News* printed an article noting a problem the British government became aware of concerning Australian wheat imports. Despite the fact that Australia had approximately 3,500,000 tons of surplus wheat available for export, by May 1916, only about 500,000 tons of this grain had been shipped to Europe for Allied consumption.¹⁸ To ship the remainder of the surplus grain from Australia to Europe in 1916 “would require about 700 voyages and it is difficult for the owners to find sufficient ships owing to the general scarcity of tonnage. The distance from Australia is about 12,000 miles as compared with the 3,000 miles which separate Canada from this country [Great Britain].”¹⁹ In essence, the American and Canadian ports were the same distance, but the United States was a far larger producer of wheat.

By late 1915, American wheat was in such demand by the British government that it was announced that “vessels loading by December 15 with wheat from an American Atlantic port shall be exempt from [military] requisition on arrival in a United Kingdom port.”²⁰ The Allies had imported American wheat prior to 1914 for their domestic needs, with estimates of 54.6 million bushels for the period of 1909-1913. By 1917, this trend had more than tripled to 187.4 million bushels as Americans producers rushed to meet the war’s demand and plowed larger acreages of wheat than they would have otherwise.²¹ A

¹⁷ Sworakowski, “Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration,” 45.

¹⁸ “The Australian Wheat,” *Hutchinson News*, May 5, 1916, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=302632> (accessed August 16, 2015).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ “England Wants More U.S. Wheat,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 7, 1915, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2946734> (accessed August 4, 2015).

²¹ Sworakowski, “Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration,” 45. These estimates included the United Kingdom, France and Italy.

fact made evident by the vast quantity of wheat harvested in the United States in 1915, which at 1,025,801,000 bushels was the largest in the nation's history to that point.²²

The 1915 total was produced from states which grew both winter and spring varieties of wheat. The two are distinguished by the differences in their planting and harvesting periods. According to *Agriculture and Farm Life*, winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in the summer of the following year. Spring wheat by contrast is planted in the spring and harvested in the fall of the same year.²³ Although there are many varieties and strains of wheat, for the purposes of this thesis, wheat will simply be divided into winter and spring. Both varieties played a role in the American wheat supply effort to the Allies.

The fact that the Allies relied primarily on American wheat by early 1917 was not without a negative. The United States was put in the position of having to provide enough wheat for domestic and foreign consumption—with European demand increasing as the war dragged on. The dual obligation caused escalating consumer prices in 1916, after the United States experienced a lower-than-expected wheat harvest.²⁴ It was feared that the United States could no longer meet its domestic and foreign obligations in regards to wheat, creating not only a potential food shortage in Europe, but also the potential of one at home.²⁵ This was especially worrisome to Great Britain, whose government in early 1917 admitted for the first time that the German U-boat campaign was having a

²² *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 14, 571.

²³ Harry A. Phillips, Edgar A. Cockefair, and James W. Graham, *Agriculture and Farm Life*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), 142.

²⁴ Sworakowski, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," 45.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

devastating impact on their ability to feed their population.²⁶ The wheat that states such as Kansas produced was not adequately reaching Europe.

Since the post-Civil War period, Kansas has been an agriculture-oriented state. An abundance of field crops was produced during the World War I era, which ranged from corn, more common in the eastern portions of the state, to sugar beets in the far western reaches. Wheat was the most important crop produced in Kansas that was a factor in winning the war.²⁷ Kansas primarily produced hard winter wheat, and although spring wheat was harvested, its numbers of bushels were miniscule in comparison. Keeping this in mind, all wheat discussed for Kansas will be referring to winter wheat, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture* highlighted the achievement of Kansas wheat production for the 1913-14 season. The wheat harvest was the state's largest to date and constituted one-fifth of the total production for the United States. J. C. Mohler was particularly proud that the season's harvest carried the distinction of producing a full 23 percent higher yield than any other state had ever managed to achieve for both varieties of wheat.²⁸ A look at the raw numbers puts the achievement in perspective. The total wheat production for the United

²⁶ "Sub Campaign Hurts England," *Concordia Daily Blade*, February 23, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3067882> (accessed August 2, 1917). February 1917 saw Germany resume its unrestricted submarine warfare campaign in hopes of starving England into defeat.

²⁷ *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, "Preface," ix.

²⁸ Kansas Department of Agriculture, *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, "Introductory," (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1915), vi. As secretary of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Mohler oversaw the publishing of the board's biennial reports.

States was 891,000,017 bushels in 1914.²⁹ It was the nation's largest harvest at that point in time.

Kansas's share of this harvest amounted to 177,200,000 bushels and far exceeded the nation's second-tier wheat producer, North Dakota, which harvested a total of 81,592,000 bushels of spring wheat.³⁰ It was a total produced from 9,061,971 acres of wheat that Kansans planted in the fall of 1913.³¹ It is important to distinguish between acres planted and acres harvested because you will rarely if ever be able to harvest every acre that is planted for a crop. The acreage of wheat harvested in 1914 was not available in the *Nineteenth Biennial Report*, but an article published in the *Hoisington Dispatch* estimated a total of 8,660,000 acres were harvested for the season. The real magnitude of the season's wheat production was put into perspective when it was found that Kansas by itself had exceed the entire nation of Canada's wheat yield by 19,000,000 bushels.³²

The wheat harvest in the summer of 1914 took place just as the European conflict was beginning and had not been planted with "war demand" in mind. According to W.M. Jardine, Dean of Agriculture and the Director of Kansas Experiment Stations, the extremely large wheat harvest was explained as a combination of favorable weather conditions, an "unusually well-prepared seedbed," and the planting of a "larger than

²⁹ United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1915, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 14, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 421, <https://ia801708.us.archive.org/24/items/yoa1915/yoa1915.pdf> (accessed August 2, 2015).

³⁰ *Nineteenth Biennial Report*, "Introductory," vi.

³¹ *Ibid.*, "Crop and Live-Stock Statistics, 1913 and 1914," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1914*, 951. 177,200,000 bushels was an incomplete statistic as the first part of this report was prepared in January 1915. When further information became available, it was found that the 1914 Winter Wheat crop in Kansas was 180,375,042 bushels.

³² "Kansas, The Great Wheat Way," *Hoisington Dispatch*, July 15, 1915, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/76204949/> (accessed August 4, 2015).

normal acreage” in the fall of 1913.³³ Kansas wheat acreage had been subtly increasing in the years prior to the war because western Kansans began cultivating grassland for wheat that had previously only been used for livestock grazing.³⁴ But this by itself did not account for the extremely large acreage planted in 1913.

The drought which hit Kansas statewide in the summer of 1913 and caused a near-total failure of the state’s 8,000,000 acres of corn planted earlier that spring assisted in the large amount of wheat harvested in 1914. According to Jardine, “Much of this corn ground had been given splendid cultivation during the summer, and consequently the soil was in excellent shape for the planting of wheat that fall [1913]. It had been virtually summer fallowed and thereby an abundance of available plant food was stored up, since little of it had been used in the production of a corn crop.”³⁵ Jardine further noted that approximately 3,000,000 acres of wheat was planted on former corn ground in the fall, which largely accounted for the increased wheat acreage in 1914.³⁶

In spite of the fact that Kansas had not intentionally produced the largest wheat crop in the nation’s history to meet European war demands, wheat was now king. The enormous numbers demonstrated that Kansas was going to play a significant role in the amount of wheat shipped to the Allies. Farmers kept this in mind when planting the next season’s acreage in the fall of 1914.

As the nation’s largest wheat producing state, Kansas naturally increased its acreage planted in the fall of 1914, in anticipation of European war demands. Wheat

³³ *Nineteenth Biennial Report*, “How to Prepare the Ground for the Wheat in Kansas,” 484. Jardine was dean of Kansas State Agricultural College which became Kansas State University.

³⁴ Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, “Preface,” (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1917), vi.

³⁵ *Nineteenth Biennial Report*, “How to Prepare the Ground for the Wheat in Kansas,” 484. Fallowed means plowed, but left unseeded.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

growers throughout the state seeded a total of 9,447,987 acres, an approximate increase of a half-million acres of the life sustaining crop.³⁷ It was also the largest landmass planted with wheat in the state's history to that point.³⁸ In spite of the fact that the acres dedicated to the crop had increased from the previous season, the actual yield of wheat in Kansas for 1915 was far less substantial than that of 1914. The total amounted to 95,141,207 bushels from 7,587,715 acres harvested.³⁹

The decreased production in Kansas was primarily due to the excessive rainfall the state received in June, July, and August, which made it difficult to harvest large portions of the state's wheat fields. By the time the weather improved, much of the wheat was over-ripened.⁴⁰ An example of this occurred in Harper County, Kansas where an article published in the *Topeka Daily Capital* explained the problems heavy rains caused for wheat producers in July 1915. According to the *Daily Capital*, "The lateness of the harvest had upset all calculations. The farmers are cutting their wheat in small patches in order to get the wheat that is on more solid ground. For the first time in the history of this section have the farmers had difficulties in getting their horses out of the fields."⁴¹

As late as May 1915, the *Topeka Daily Capital* still expected the wheat harvest to take place from approximately mid-June through July, beginning in southern Kansas counties, which was the traditional time for the harvest to begin.⁴² The overall wheat harvest in Kansas concluded after being delayed between two and three months because

³⁷ *Twentieth Biennial Report*, "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1915 and 1916," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1915*, 595.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, "Preface," vi.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1915 and 1916," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1915*, 595.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, "Preface," vi.

⁴¹ "Late Wheat Harvest Spoils Fourth," *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 5, 1915, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/64571169/> (accessed August 20, 2015).

⁴² "Wheat Harvest On In About Six Weeks," *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 8, 1915, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3053177> (accessed August 20, 2015).

of weather conditions. The *Wichita Daily Eagle* reported that in some portions of the state, the harvest was not completed until late November.⁴³

An example of the rain's impact on the harvest can be seen by examining Harper County, Kansas. In 1915, the county produced 1,818,810 bushels of wheat, which was no small accomplishment in terms of production.⁴⁴ But when viewed in the context of the previous year's harvest of 4,533,100 bushels, the extent of loss can be fully appreciated.⁴⁵ In spite of the reduction caused by the weather, Kansas was still the largest producer of winter wheat in the nation for 1915; its closest competitor was Nebraska at 66,618,000 bushels. In terms of sheer production, it came in second behind North Dakota and their abundant supply of 151,970,000 bushels of spring wheat.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, as stated in the first part of this chapter, 1915 was the most productive year to date in terms of wheat production for the nation at 1,025,801,000 bushels harvested.⁴⁷ It was a threshold and a surplus that certainly would not have been reached without Kansas's contribution.

In contrast to 1915, weather conditions in Kansas during 1916 were more favorable for producing wheat. The harvest took place from June-July as was typical in previous years. The 1915-1916 crop was the second largest in Kansas history, as reported by J.C. Mohler in the *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*.⁴⁸ There were 8,643,187 acres planted to wheat in the fall of 1915, of which a

⁴³ "Still Thresh," *Wichita Daily Eagle*, November 19, 1915
<http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3053195> (accessed August 20, 2015).

⁴⁴ *Twentieth Biennial Report*, "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1915 and 1916," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1915*, 595.

⁴⁵ *Nineteenth Biennial Report*, "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1913 and 1914," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1914*, 951.

⁴⁶ *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1915, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 15, 422.

⁴⁷ *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 14, 571.

⁴⁸ *Twentieth Biennial Report*, "Preface," vii.

total of 7,782,570 were harvested. Total production was 98,977,265 bushels of wheat or roughly one-sixth of the nation's entire productive capacity.⁴⁹

Kansas was one of the few states to increase its production from the previous year at a time when nationally, overall wheat production was in decline. The decreased capacity was discussed earlier and was extremely worrisome at the beginning of 1917, because of the United States' obligation of producing wheat for both domestic and European consumption.⁵⁰ Overall production in the United States was cut nearly in half from 1915 levels, when over one billion bushels of wheat were harvested, to approximately 639,886,000 bushels in 1916.⁵¹

Kansas was once again the largest wheat producer in the nation, and again this held true even for states that produced large quantities of spring wheat. North Dakota experienced a severe reduction in its wheat harvest from the previous year, producing only 39,325,000 bushels. The closest competitor to Kansas in terms of production in 1916 was once again Nebraska, which harvested a total 64,800,000 bushels of winter wheat.⁵² The Kansas wheat harvest in 1917 failed to be as productive.

The harvests of 1914-16 were justified in meeting the demands of the American and Allied markets. In this light, Kansas assisted the war effort by providing a reliable and bountiful source of wheat abroad and helped satisfy domestic needs. The period between 1914 and 1916 saw Kansas become the nation's largest wheat producer. Even with lower-expected total wheat production in 1915, because of weather fluctuations, the

⁴⁹ Ibid., "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1915 and 1916," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1916*, 597.

⁵⁰ Sworakowski, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," 45.

⁵¹ *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1916, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 14, 571.

⁵² Ibid., Table 15, 571-572.

importance of Kansas as a wheat producing state could not be diminished—Kansas alone produced an enormous portion of American wheat. For 1914 and 1916, this amounted to one-fifth and one-sixth of the nation’s total wheat production respectively.⁵³ Based on this alone, it was clear any disruption in the state’s productivity would have ramifications on world supply. A disruption in productivity happened during the 1916-17 season, when the nation’s winter wheat crop failed in several states. The failure made it difficult to make up for the less-than-stellar performance of the nation’s wheat harvest in 1916, which had fallen short of expectations.⁵⁴

The failure of winter wheat was particularly acute in Kansas and the 1916-17 season did not get off to an ample start. The lack of rain in the fall of 1916 caused extreme dryness in several wheat producing counties, which complicated the farmers’ task of planting grain in September as was customary. Farmers feared that weather conditions would prevent a suitable amount of wheat seed from being planted that fall, but these fears were unfounded. The *Hutchinson News* explained conditions in the Kansas wheat belt:

A big wheat area is being sown late in Kansas this year, according to reports coming to the state board of agriculture. There was a strip of “dry” country running right through the middle of the wheat belt. Much of the land could not be plowed until late and after being plowed the land was so dry that it was practically useless to sow the wheat. The big rains of Tuesday has [*sic*] changed conditions and according to letters received by the board, there will be a big sowing of wheat in the next week or ten days. The wheat was on hand and the farmers were waiting for a big rain. . . . In western Kansas wheat that has been sown as late as December has made a good crop the following year. All the wheat needs is a few days of warm weather after it comes up and when the ordinary cold that comes to Kansas during the last two months of the year cannot change it to any extent.⁵⁵

⁵³ *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, “Preface,” ix.

⁵⁴ Sworakowski, “Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration,” 45.

⁵⁵ “Sowing Big Wheat Area,” *Hutchinson News*, October 26, 1916, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3066406> (accessed August 2, 2015).

According to the *Topeka Daily Capital*, the Kansas “wheat belt” was “a well-defined area in the central and southern portions of the state,” which produced the largest quantities of wheat.⁵⁶ The *Abilene Daily Chronicle* reported that J.C. Mohler considered eight counties located in the central and southern portions of Kansas as the “heart” of the wheat belt. These were the counties of Sumner, Reno, Sedgewick, McPherson, Dickinson, Marion, Barton, and Stafford.⁵⁷

Disregarding the late planting in the fall of 1916, farmers still expected a generous harvest in the summer of 1917, or they would not have planted a total of 9,587,721 acres of wheat, larger than both the acreages of 1914 and 1915.⁵⁸ The optimism was not justified because by early spring 1917, it was clear that due to a combination of dry weather, a mild winter, and high winds that resulted in the loss of top soil, there was going to be a severe reduction in the size of Kansas’s wheat crop.⁵⁹

It was a forgone conclusion by April 1917, and the *Topeka Daily Capital* informed readers of the poor condition of Kansas wheat. According to writer J.C. Mohler, in the “big wheat” counties, there was expected to be only 25 to 50 percent the size of a normal crop.⁶⁰ Mohler noted, “Reports based on conditions existing March 28, received by the state board of agriculture....indicate that the prospect for wheat in the western two-thirds of the state, comprising the ‘wheat belt’ proper, is decidedly poor.”⁶¹ Mohler

⁵⁶ “Will Plant Wheat,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, October 3, 1901, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4492706> (accessed March 2, 2016). At the time of this publication there were 26 counties considered part of the wheat belt.

⁵⁷ “Dickinson Fifth,” *Abilene Daily Chronicle*, May 15, 1919, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4586335> (accessed March 11, 2016).

⁵⁸ *Twenty First Biennial Report*, “Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1917 and 1918,” *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1917*, 598.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, “Preface,” x.

⁶⁰ “Kansas Wheat Prospects Aren’t of the Brightest,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 3, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3066872> (accessed August 22, 2015).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

further revealed that, “information from these sources suggest that as much as half the acreage sown is worthless, with a comparative low condition for the wheat on the remaining acreage.”⁶²

The extent of the loss can be seen using as an example Barton County, Kansas, which in 1916 produced a total of 3,575,404 bushels of wheat.⁶³ The following conditions were reported for the prospective 1917 harvest in Barton County: “Wheat is in bad shape and does not appear to improve. The present prospects are for about 25 per cent of a crop.”⁶⁴ The report was accurate enough; Barton County produced only 481,251 bushels of wheat in 1917.⁶⁵

Overall in Kansas, 41,479,464 bushels of wheat were harvested in 1917 from a total of 3,528,609 acres or about one-third of the original 9,587,721 acres dedicated to the grain.⁶⁶ This was a devastating reduction in a state that had produced one-fifth and one-sixth of the nation’s wheat during the war years 1914 and 1916.⁶⁷ In addition to the wheat acreage that had been lost by early April, the United States declared war on Germany, and in May, the Selective Service Act was passed by Congress, which enacted a military draft for the nation. It was feared that the draft would cause Kansas to have farm labor shortages and thus have trouble harvesting what little wheat acreage it had left during the summer of 1917, because of available men having to report to training cantonments. Fears of the draft interfering with the planting and harvesting of wheat quickly became a

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Twentieth Biennial Report*, “Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1915 and 1916,” *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1916*, 597.

⁶⁴ “Kansas Wheat Prospects aren’t of the Brightest,” *Topeka Daily Capital*. April 3, 1917.

⁶⁵ *Twenty First Biennial Report*, “Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1917 and 1918,” *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1917*, 598.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., “Preface,” ix.

concern of Capper and farmers in 1917. Capper and farmers both believed agricultural exemptions from the draft were necessary in order to maintain wheat production. The belief in agricultural exemptions helped feed the notion that farmers were slackers, or draft evaders, when it came to patriotically complying with the decisions of draft boards. Chapter Five will address this topic further.

Although Kansas was hit hard in terms of the total wheat acreage lost in 1917, the failure was not limited to its borders. As reported by *Topeka Daily Capital*, the wheat crop failed in many of the winter wheat producing states of the nation: “How much of last fall’s acreage will have to be abandoned because of conditions which prevailed during the winter, has been the cause of much speculation. Reports from different sources reaching the department of agriculture have indicated that there was some winter killing of winter wheat in many sections of Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.”⁶⁸ Nebraska, for instance, in 1916, ranked second behind Kansas, producing nearly 65 million bushels of winter wheat. However, in 1917, Nebraska only produced 7,164,000 bushels of wheat from the 597,000 acres that survived to be harvested.⁶⁹

An examination of the raw numbers for the 1917 winter wheat crop shows precisely how large the winter wheat failure was across the United States. The nation as a whole produced a total of 418,070,000 bushels of winter wheat from 27,430,000 acres where the grain survived.⁷⁰ This was from a total of 40,090,000 acres originally planted

⁶⁸ “Crop Lowest ever with War at Hand.” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 8, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3066733> (accessed August 11, 2015).

⁶⁹ United States Department of Agriculture. *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1917, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 15, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 615-616. <https://ia801708.us.archive.org/19/items/yoa1917/yoa1917.pdf> (accessed April 13, 2016).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

across the nation.⁷¹ Taking into account spring wheat production, the United States produced a total of 650,828,000 bushels of wheat in 1917; slightly better overall than the previous year. If states such as Kansas had not lost large portions of their winter wheat crops because of weather conditions, the number of bushels produced would have been far greater—perhaps even rivaling 1915 production levels.⁷²

The failure of the United States winter wheat crop in several states in the spring of 1917 did not help the food situation. Domestic needs at home for wheat still had to be met, and the Allies also had an increasing demand for grain. Both of these together were bad enough in light of the fact that the previous year's wheat harvest (1916) fell short of expectations.⁷³ But as the United States had also declared war on Germany in April 1917, an American army had to be raised and fed, which meant the demand for wheat would be greater still. The removal of men from the agricultural sector for service in the army meant that increasing food production would be even more of a challenge, during a time of increasing demand. Great Britain had learned this lesson and appropriately decided that there needed to be a balance between men for the army and men for the farms if the needs of both were to be met.⁷⁴

Capper's fears over the impending failure of the Kansas winter wheat crop in March 1917 and his belief that the United States would be entering the war led to his convening a food conference in Topeka on March 15, 1917, before either of these events had actually occurred. Capper's purpose for calling this food conference was to address

⁷¹ "Crop Lowest Ever with War at Hand," *Topeka Daily Capital*. April 8, 1917.

⁷² *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1917, Statistics of Wheat*, Table 14, 616.

⁷³ Sworakowski, "Herbert Hoover, Launching the American Food Administration," 45.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

the issues of increasing food production and the necessity of striking a balance between recruiting men for the army and keeping men on the farms.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE KANSAS FOOD CONFERENCE

The convening of the Kansas Food Conference demonstrated that even before American entry into World War I in April 1917, Governor Arthur Capper's main concern was increasing food production in Kansas. Capper understood the difficulties of increasing the production of wheat and other staple crops during a war, when military service drained the agricultural sector of farmers and workers. As reported in the *Evening Kansan-Republican*, the Kansas Agricultural Conference was held in Topeka on March 15, 1917, at the behest of Capper, and was chaired by Dr. H. J. Waters, president of Kansas State Agricultural College. Aside from organizing the conference, Capper's main role was calling the proceedings to order and delivering the opening address to the 150 delegates in attendance. These consisted of leading Kansas "farmers, bankers, businessmen, agriculture experts, economists, and other public spirited citizens from Kansas and adjacent states," who were invited for their abilities to put Kansas in a "state of preparedness" for the production of food crops.¹

The purpose behind this food conference was to call attention to the anticipated shortage in the world's food supply in the upcoming months and to brainstorm some basic recommendations on how Kansas, specifically the state's agricultural sector, could alleviate this expected shortage. According to the *Topeka Daily Capital*, two main factors contributed to the prospective food shortage: the first was an actual world-wide shortage

¹ "More Crops and Lower C. of L.," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, March, 15, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3086747> (accessed August 25, 2015). Kansas State Agricultural College became Kansas State University.

of the food supply at a time demand was at its highest due to the war in Europe, in particular for grain crops such as wheat, and potatoes. Both of which the United States had a less than normal production of in 1916.² The second was the increased costs for consumers on the home front of certain foodstuffs at the marketplace, such as potatoes,³ a phenomenon believed to be caused by speculators. A speculator would purchase large quantities of a commodity and then let it remain idle for a period instead of supplying it directly to the marketplace for consumers to purchase. In this way, demand for products rose, as did prices, when the commodity was finally supplied to the marketplace and made available for consumer purchase.⁴

In his opening remarks Capper stated, “it seems to be generally admitted that the world will face a food shortage in the next year,”⁵ an outcome made more likely by the gloomy outlook of the overall condition of the Kansas winter wheat acreage planted in the fall of 1916, which was suffering from dry weather conditions and in danger of a near-total failure.⁶ In the weeks prior to the food conference, Capper decided that Kansas should engage in food preparedness and believed the most efficient strategy to adopt was one of maximum food production. Capper believed the farmer’s role would be vital in the months to come because by early March 1917, he increasingly believed it unlikely that the United States could remain out of the European conflict, a view Capper made abundantly clear in in a letter dated March 6:

² Ibid. *Evening Kansan-Republican* made no mention of speculation in Europe at this time.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3070521> (accessed August 22, 2015).

⁵ “More Crops and Lower C. of L.,” *Evening Kansan-Republican*. March, 15, 1917.

⁶ “Kansas Wheat Prospects Aren’t of the Brightest,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 3, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3066872> (accessed August 22, 2015). A mild winter and high winds that blew away top soil also contributed to the poor condition of the fall 1916 wheat acreage.

The likelihood that America will be drawn into the World war [*sic*] is hourly increasing. But whether we get into the war or not, the fact remains that there is a world-wide shortage of food. With this comes the duty and obligation of every producer to exert his energies to increase his output. This especially holds with the farmer, who must feed the world. It seems reasonably certain that high prices will continue; therefore Kansas, for business and economic reasons, as from motives of humanity, must do her full share in food production this year....⁷

The “high prices” Capper mentioned in the above quote demonstrated his awareness of speculators manipulating the market. It was a problem Capper believed could not be solved in the short term, and even if it could be, it would not resolve the overall shortages caused by a combination of increasing demand because of the war and the poor national wheat harvest of 1916.⁸ The shortage would only increase with the likely failure of the current season’s [1916-17] winter wheat. The best way to alleviate the food crisis in Capper’s mind was to increase overall food production, which included wheat alternatives such as oats, rye, and buckwheat. As a matter of fact, Capper’s objective in calling the food conference was “to suggest ways and means by which the food production of the state may be increased.”⁹

In spite of Capper’s stated desire of focusing on increasing production at the food conference, speculation could not be ignored. The *Topeka Daily Capital* explained speculation in more depth: “the food shortage which this conference has been called to consider is due in part to the concentration and withholding from the markets for speculative purposes a part of the visible supply, and in part to the inability of the

⁷ Letter, Arthur Capper to Unaddressed Parties, 6 March 1917, Box 25, World War I General Correspondence 1917-1918, Arthur Capper Papers M.S. 12, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka. This appears to be a form letter to the people of Kansas.

⁸ Discussed in Chapter Three, the national wheat harvest in 1916 produced only 639,886,000 bushels of wheat. Production was cut nearly in half from the 1915 harvest.

⁹ Letter, Arthur Capper to Unaddressed Parties, 6 March 1917.

railroads to move promptly the needed supplies from points of production to the centers of consumption.”¹⁰

To this point, problems with speculation were more pronounced in urban areas, especially in the eastern United States, but were not limited to this geographic area. During mid-March 1917, when the food conference was held in Topeka, many, but not all, of the accusations of speculation were related to fresh vegetables and potatoes. Potatoes were nearly as valuable as wheat to the human body.¹¹ Although it should be noted that W. M. Jardine, dean of Kansas State Agricultural College, briefly broached the subject of wheat speculation, it was not yet the national concern it became in later months.¹²

To provide an example of how excessive prices became because of speculation, the *Concordia Daily Blade* highlighted the price of a sack of potatoes in New York City at the marketplace, where costs rose from \$3.25 to as much as \$9.00. Exorbitant prices such as these on foodstuffs caused actual food riots within the city.¹³ One point Capper made clear at the food conference was that the producers of foodstuffs were not responsible for increased prices for consumers and that, “the blame for ‘food riots’ does not lay at the farmers’ door.”¹⁴ In other words, speculators of commodities and not producers were the ones benefitting from higher market prices.

¹⁰ “Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917.

¹¹ Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 84-85.

¹² “Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917. The speculation of wheat did not come to the forefront until after war was declared and occupied much of Capper’s attention; however, this is outside the scope of this thesis.

¹³ “Food Situation is ‘Chaotic,’” *Concordia Daily Blade*, February 21, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3089341> (accessed August 25, 2015).

¹⁴ “More Crops and Lower C. of L.,” *Evening Kansas-Republican*, March, 15, 1917.

Consumers commonly believed that there was no actual shortage in the food supply and that the problem was solely an artificial one caused by speculators taking advantage of war prices and railroad congestion that prevented shipments from being delivered to urban areas. As another article in the same issue of the *Concordia Daily Blade* explained, “The eastern roads are the cause of western congestion.... The shortages you hear about do not exist. Speculators and market manipulators can jockey the situation to suit themselves. With the war as an excuse they are getting by with it as never before.”¹⁵

Capper acknowledged that speculators were using railroad transportation difficulties to their advantage in order to further raise prices on consumers in the “centers of population” of the nation because when there was a shortage of a foodstuff in “one place,” that shortage could not be resolved quickly because of the railroad congestion.¹⁶ Capper further stated, “the doubling and trebling and quadrupling of the prices of many commodities after they reach the distributing market [does] point unmistakably to manipulation of a sort....The freight congestion is, of course, another factor that has contributed to the shortage of available supplies in the centers of population....”¹⁷ As an example, Capper cited the shortage of flour in DeKalb, Illinois. Even though Kansas had plenty of flour on hand in its mills, the product could not be shipped to where it was needed because of railroad troubles.¹⁸

¹⁵ “No Car Relief in Sight,” *Concordia Daily Blade*, February 21, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3089341> (accessed August 25, 2015).

¹⁶ Arthur Capper, “Increasing Food Production,” *Addresses and Messages*, (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 493.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 493-494.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 494.

Despite acknowledging that speculation was a concern for consumers, the rising costs of foodstuffs because of speculation was not the main concern of Capper at the food conference. In his opening remarks Capper noted, “This conference has not been called with the idea of solving the problem presented by the high cost of living [speculation]....”¹⁹ Capper’s main concern was on how to increase Kansas food production and supply for the benefit of the nation, either staple crops such as wheat or seasonal crops such as potatoes. According to Capper, the solution for the food crisis was to produce more in order to alleviate the market and prepare against a future supply shortage. Capper suspected the United States would soon enter the war, and consequently placed additional pressure on food producers:

But taking all that into consideration the fact remains that the world’s supply of foodstuffs is below normal. More than 25 million men have been withdrawn from productive pursuits and put under arms. But they keep right on consuming—perhaps on the whole in larger quantities than when engaged in their ordinary occupations. Other thousands of men have been withdrawn from their usual pursuits to supply the armies of Europe with munitions. It is impossible that this drain upon the industries of the world could fail to decrease production, no matter how great the effort at war to make up the deficiency.²⁰

Capper pointed out that when men are removed from farms by mass mobilization and used to fulfill the industries of war, food production would always be hindered. This had not yet happened in the United States as it had in European nations, primarily England. But young and abled-bodied men being removed from the nation’s farms, either by choice or by coercion if the United States entered the war, was clearly on Capper’s mind even at this early date. The pressure on farmers to produce wheat in the face of the nation’s dwindling overall supply was already enormous. If the United States entered the

¹⁹ Ibid., 493.

²⁰ Ibid., 494.

war, this pressure would be greater still because farmers would have to continue producing wheat, but with the added burden of reduced labor power and even further increased consumption because of the needs of the military.

The poor national wheat harvest in 1916 and the increasingly poor outlook for the Kansas harvest in 1917 helped explain Capper's emphasis on increasing production. Capper was as aware as any other public official that Europe's demand for grain was continually growing, and coupled with an anticipated American entry into the war, it was essential that food production be increased as much as possible. This fact was doubly true for wheat, and it was necessary for the United States to plant an enormous acreage in the fall of 1917 in order to harvest an abundant crop in the summer of 1918. Americans needed to produce enough wheat for the needs of domestic consumption, European civilian and military consumption, and American military consumption.

The precise details of the topics discussed at the Kansas Food Conference are scarce, but the *Topeka Daily Capital* provided a basic overview for its readers. Not surprisingly, a main theme was the urgency for farmers to be given the utmost aid in growing and producing crops, primarily wheat. Although very few specifics of this aid were mentioned, Capper's emphasis on increasing production remained strong. Likewise, a few other issues were discussed, especially cost-cutting techniques that both urban and rural families could adopt.²¹

Two prominent examples of cost-cutting techniques were provided by President Waters of the state agricultural college and by President W. A. Lewis of the Hays Normal School. Waters brought forth the idea of engaging in "thriftiness" within the home as a

²¹ "Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need," *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917.

way to assist consumers, and suggested that urban families start keeping their own backyard chicken coops in an effort to save money on eggs and poultry, a type of “backyard” production that could expand into other endeavors, including vegetable gardens. If adopted, strategies such as these would allow families to save money, and thus enable them to purchase those items that were not more easily home-grown.²²

Lewis recommended that urban families attempt to cut out the middlemen who were charging for the canning, packaging, and transportation of food to the marketplace, and encouraged families to perform these processes themselves as their rural counterparts did. By growing, canning, and preserving their own fruits and vegetables, families could save money in the long run. In addition, by reducing their costs, families could have a profound impact on the market by reducing demand and consumer costs overall.²³

These conservation, preservation, and backyard production techniques were similar to what the U.S. Food Administration advocated later in the year under Herbert Hoover, and Kansans took pride at being at the forefront of these practices. The concept that urban residents should contribute to food production with backyard gardens was particularly popular amongst the representatives of agriculture at the food conference. According to the committee on resolutions that hammered out the final points of recommendation, “One point that nearly every speaker agreed on was that the farmer could not be expected to put much more ground to vegetables and small crops. Labor is going to be scarce this year and little intensive farming can be done. It is up to the people of the cities and small towns, the boys and girls—‘an army of half a million of

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

themselves' . . . to utilize the vacant lots and back yards [*sic*] this spring and summer to increase the food supply along these lines."²⁴

Jardine of the state agricultural college, especially reiterated the point that backyards and vacant lots in urban Kansas should be used for "productive purposes," reasoning that labor was going to be scarce in 1917. Jardine did not state why he believed this was going to be the case, but he stressed farmers would be hard pressed to handle the larger crops, such as wheat or other grains, and that any extra production of food from urban residents would help take the burden off of farmers.²⁵

Examples of recommendations from other speakers at the conference included calls for an "organization of farmers for the purposes of marketing products," by C.L. Seagraves who was industrial commissioner of the Santa Fe railroad company.²⁶ Although Seagraves gave no specifics, he claimed an organization such as this would result in better prices for farmers for their products and lower prices for consumers at the marketplace. Seagraves made a point of stating that the prices farmers were receiving for their products were actually "little above" the actual costs of production.²⁷ He reiterated that the higher costs for consumers at the marketplace could not be placed at the farmer's doorstep. Other speakers were present at the conference, but these will not be discussed because, according to the *Daily Capital*, all of the speakers were "along the same line" with their recommendations on cutting consumer costs.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Capper's main concern at the conference was increasing food production rather than cutting costs of foodstuffs for consumers. But this did not mean he opposed the conclusions reached by the conference attendees. Ultimately, the recommendations included:

That a federal food commission be created, clothed with power to regulate and control the storage, distribution, and transportation of all food products whenever necessary to end that oppressive concentration and manipulation of food products....

That the people in cities and towns be urged to utilize all vacant ground available for growing garden truck crops for immediate table use, and to preserve by canning or in storage, all surplus products for winter use....

That it is the sense of this conference that bankers should co-operate with farmers everywhere in providing funds....

It is further the sense of this conference that the farmers of this country are not now receiving excessive prices for food products....

We urge against the plowing up of any Kansas grass lands [used for livestock grazing], induced by the present high prices of grain....

We urge Kansas farmers, as far as possible, to retain their breeding [beef] stock....

We urge the use of seed adapted to our own local conditions....

We urge special attention to the timely and thoro [*sic*] preparation of the seedbed for this springs [*sic*] crops.²⁹

The generalized recommendations were informal solutions farmers, ranchers, and other citizens could adopt in order to combat both food shortages and high consumer costs. It is important to note that no concrete plan of action was proposed by the conference attendees in March 1917, and that these were mere suggestions for Kansas citizens to consider. Although it was strongly encouraged that Kansans personally carry out these recommendations to the best of their abilities.

²⁹ Ibid.

One recommendation that urban Kansans immediately took to heart in March 1917 was the development of backyard vegetable gardens for table use, a development which became national after American entry into the war in April 1917. According to the *Leavenworth Times*, by February 1918, backyard gardens had become popularized as “Liberty Gardens” in the United States.³⁰ Urban backyard gardens both increased production and allowed families to cut internal household costs in a relatively short period of time. The *Ottawa Herald* reported on March 31, 1917, that “garden fever” had quite literally spread in Kansas, with Topeka alone having 154 new “lots” put into cultivation on formerly vacant land. The *Herald* further reported, “This increased activity in backyard and vacant lot gardening is said to be due the campaign made by the agricultural conference called by Governor Capper for a statewide campaign to increase crops in the state and also local campaigns in the various cities and towns.”³¹

The recommendations of the March 1917 food conference were meant to contribute to increased food production, but for the most part, these recommendations were not implemented until after the United States officially entered the war on April 6, 1917, and began mobilization. The Kansas Council of Defense adopted and expanded upon these recommendations, beginning in March. The need to maximize food production, as outlined by the federal government, enhanced the state’s efforts which were already underway because of Capper convening the Kansas Food Conference.

³⁰ “Grow a Liberty Garden,” *Leavenworth Times*, February 27, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=4254610> (accessed February 8, 2016). Liberty Gardens re-emerged as Victory Gardens during World War II.

³¹ “Garden Fever Spreads,” *Ottawa Herald*, March 31, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3103107> (accessed August 27, 2015). The United States Garden Army was created as a result of the backyard garden movement during World War I.

Writing in Frank Blackmar's *History of the Kansas Council of Defense*, Waters took the position that the Kansas Food Conference was important because it brought national attention to the danger of a potential world food shortage. According to Waters, by holding a food conference in March 1917, Kansas signaled that it was taking the lead in agricultural production and awareness for the nation.³² Agriculture was an issue that had increasing importance as Kansas and the United States mobilized for war.

The belief that the Kansas Food Conference had started a trend was one which Waters was not shy about expressing and that Kansans readily embraced. For example, Waters claimed that the conference's recommendation for a federal food commission to regulate and control prices was very similar to the role the U.S. Food Administration held during the war. He also pointed out that Kansas set the stage for the National Agricultural Conference in St. Louis, Missouri held in April 1917. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture D.F. Houston organized this conference to address the same food shortage issues that Capper had already recognized. Waters was in a good position to make these comparisons. In addition to having been appointed chair of the Kansas Food Conference by Capper, Waters was also appointed president of the Kansas Council of Defense.³³

The Kansas Council of Defense, commonly referred to as the State Council, fell under the umbrella of the Council of National Defense and was an attempt by the federal government to develop a coherent national policy that defined the role of the states in the war effort. On April 7, 1917, one day after the United State declared war against Germany, the state council of defense system was formally called into existence when

³² H.J. Waters, "The Work of the Kansas Council of Defense," in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, ed. Frank W. Blackmar, 17-20. (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), 17.

³³ *Ibid.*

letters were sent to the governors of each state urging them to appoint councils that represented their state's best resources for the war effort. The exact role of each state's council varied, but the goal was to assist the federal government, which had the responsibility of overall mobilization and directing the course of the war as it related to the military, manpower, food production, and manufacturing of the nation. The state councils assisted in this effort by channeling each of their respective resources.³⁴ For Kansas, mobilizing food producers and coordinating overall agricultural production, particularly wheat, was the role of the state and thus the Kansas Council of Defense. Throughout the war, Capper often made his viewpoint known through the State Council.

The purpose of this thesis is not to evaluate the state council of defense system or write a history of the Kansas Council of Defense, but the significance of the Kansas Food Conference called by Capper in March 1917 should be acknowledged. The conference was the first organized body in the nation to recognize and to seek remedies for the approaching food crisis. Because of this, the Kansas Food Conference was retroactively considered the first informal meeting of the Kansas Council of Defense when it was formally established in April 1917. Indeed, many of the key players from March were appointed to positions on the State Council by Capper, just as Waters had been.³⁵ Other examples included Jardine, who was appointed chairman of the council's agricultural production committee and President Lewis of Hays Normal School, who served as a member of the agricultural sub-committee on field crops, seeds, and soils.³⁶

³⁴ William. J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense 1917-1919* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 9.

³⁵ H.J. Waters, "The Work of the Kansas Council of Defense," 17. The formal establishment of the Kansas Council of Defense is discussed in Chapter Five.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

Capper believed there was not an immediate cause for panic in 1917, because of an actual food shortage that year, a position that U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Houston also took. Capper made this perfectly clear in the closing of his address at the food conference: “I agree with Secretary Houston that there is no immediate cause for hysteria or panic. We are not going to starve to death this winter and there is no immediate need of a food dictatorship.”³⁷

Capper was accurate in this regard and the attendees of the food conference concurred with his statement, with the general consensus being, “enough wheat was held over from 1915 to provide more than a normal supply for the United States in 1917.”³⁸ In other words, the 1915 national harvest was so bountiful that it could meet American needs through the rest of 1917. This assessment was accurate according to the *Salina Daily Union*, which reported that the normal domestic requirements for wheat, including consumption, seed, and a reasonable reserve, was 640,000,000 bushels. The United States had nearly 804,000,000 bushels in storage from the 1915 harvest.³⁹

Even with increased demand from across the Atlantic because of the war, the United States was still in a position to provide for its citizens at home and Europeans abroad. But doing so in 1917 would completely drain the American surplus because the national 1916 wheat harvest was not sufficiently large enough to replenish the national reserve.⁴⁰ Capper was thinking ahead to 1918, and wanted the public to be aware of the

³⁷ Arthur Capper, “Increasing Food Production,” *Addresses and Messages*, 494.

³⁸ “Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917. The 1915 wheat harvest netted over one billion bushels nationally.

³⁹ “Food Situation in Our Country,” *Salina Daily Union*, March 5, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/92705775/> (accessed August 10, 2015). Kansas had trouble securing seed for farmers in the fall of 1917.

⁴⁰ “Food Conference Takes Broad View of National Need,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1917.

potential danger of a serious shortage and to increase production as much as possible during 1917, before it got to a panic and actual starvation in the coming years.

Three weeks after the conclusion of the food conference, on April 5, 1917, and one day prior to the United States declaring war on Germany, Capper issued an appeal to Kansans to produce more food in the name of patriotism. The appeal was printed in the *Olathe Daily Mirror* and emphasized the necessity of increasing food production. Capper was referring to staple crops, which were the only feasible way to ward off famine, and this was his main focus at the food conference the month prior in March. But Capper also took the opportunity to reiterate many of the conference recommendations, such as that families should utilize wasted urban land and vacant lots to plant vegetable gardens and can and preserve their own fruits and vegetables as much as possible.⁴¹

Capper's public appeal to patriotism did not mention price speculation, which indicated that in the weeks prior to American entry into the war, his mind was focused on overall food production as the more important factor. In his appeal to patriotism address Capper stated:

The [March 1917 food] conference issued a patriotic appeal to the people of Kansas to increase, in every possible manner, the acreage of food crops; to utilize all waste tracts of ground and vacant lots in cities and towns.... The conference resulted in a fuller appreciation by the people of the state of the gravity of the food situation, and there has been a prompt and commendable response by the Agricultural Department of the National Government, which has since issued a statement urging the fullest possible production this year....⁴²

Capper's appeal was in part due to the fact that by early April 1917, it was now a certainty the Kansas winter wheat crop was going to fail in large portions of the state

⁴¹ "The Food Situation Still More Serious," *Olathe Daily Mirror*, April 5, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3070495> (accessed August 22, 2015). It's likely that this addressed was printed in other publications as well, although none were found.

⁴² *Ibid.*

because of the dry weather conditions.⁴³ Capper's assumption that the United States would shortly enter the war also played a part in issuing this renewed appeal on April 5 to produce more food. In reference to the weeks after the March 1917 food conference Capper stated, "Crop conditions, especially in the winter wheat belt, have grown steadily worse, and the likelihood of the United States becoming involved in the war has rapidly increased."⁴⁴ Because of these two factors, Capper believed it necessary to once again "urge upon" Kansans to maximize food production for the season and to conserve any stocks of food that were on hand because "the great need which is certain to confront us cannot be overemphasized."⁴⁵

At the time, and through the rest of 1917, Capper cared little about how production was increased; to him the important factor was utilizing the land and producing the food required in order to feed the world. Unused or underutilized land was one way in which a farmer could be labeled a slacker during the war. "Slacker" was a term used to describe men who attempted to evade the draft or used to describe anyone who was seen as not contributing to the war effort, such as a farmer failing to do his utmost to produce crops.⁴⁶

Capper's address appealing to patriotism was noteworthy for highlighting the question of farm labor and military service for the first time as it specifically applied to Kansas. Capper had previously raised the issue of militaries draining the agricultural

⁴³ "Kansas Wheat Prospects Aren't of the Brightest," *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 3, 1917. The poor outlook of the state's winter wheat crop was one reason Capper convened the Kansas Food Conference to begin with.

⁴⁴ "The Food Situation Still More Serious," *Olathe Daily Mirror*, April 5, 1917.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 30. Farmers as slackers is discussed in Chapter Five.

sector of farmers and workers in the Allied nations (primarily England), and how it harmed food production at the March 1917 food conference. In this renewed appeal, Capper discussed his fear that a problem of this nature could develop in Kansas once the nation was at war. "One of the main problems confronting the farmer of Kansas is the question of labor. If there be a call for troops in large numbers, this situation will be still further complicated; everything should be done, therefore, to encourage our young men to seek employment on farms this season."⁴⁷

At this juncture, Capper was referring to losing Kansas farm labor strictly because of volunteer military service and not a military draft, because the Selective Service Act was not passed by Congress until May 1917. Prior to that, Capper assumed that men would either choose to stay on the farm or leave and join the military of their own accord.⁴⁸ Even so, Capper was concerned about a loss of agricultural production of wheat during planting and harvesting periods because of inadequate labor power due to volunteering for military service. Capper spent the first several weeks of American entry into the war conducting a campaign for men and boys to stay on the farm and not volunteer for the military.⁴⁹

These concerns about pitfalls in agriculture were amplified with the passage of the Selective Service Act in May 1917. In Capper's mind, conscription without agricultural exemptions would result in an even further loss of production than would simple volunteerism. Capper realized that there was a need for both skilled and unskilled

⁴⁷ "The Food Situation Still More Serious," *Olathe Daily Mirror*, April 5, 1917.

⁴⁸ This was in spite of the best efforts of men like former President Theodore Roosevelt and former Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood who led the campaign for military preparedness and a draft, as was discussed in Chapter One.

⁴⁹ This campaign and will be touched upon in the next chapter.

workers on the farm. Their potential loss to the Selective Service machinery became a critical issue to Capper in 1917 once the draft took effect and the question of agricultural exemptions arose.

Capper was aware that although urban dwellers could utilize their yards and vacant lots to grow potatoes and a variety of vegetables, the vast majority of food would have to come from wheat and other staple crops grown by large-scale, cash-cropping farmers. These were the people who truly fed the world and they needed to remain on the farms to produce and have an acceptable amount of labor at their disposal. The next chapter will discuss Governor Capper's continued views on increasing food (wheat) production, his views on agricultural exemptions from the draft as the system took effect in July 1917, and the farmers' struggle with the draft.

CHAPTER FIVE
GOVERNOR CAPPER, “SLACKER” FARMERS, AND AGRICULTURAL
EXEMPTIONS, 1917

When the United States declared war on April 6, 1917, Governor Arthur Capper immediately dropped any opposition to entering the European conflict and supported the war effort. Chapter Two discussed Capper’s original viewpoint of advocating for volunteerism over conscription in order to raise an army prior to the Selective Service Act in May 1917. After U. S. Secretary of War Newton Baker informed Capper that draft legislation was going to pass Congress, Capper informed the War Department that he would no longer oppose the draft.¹ Personal feelings aside, Capper made it clear that he supported the president’s proposal. What Capper did not make clear were his feelings on drafting farmers into the army. Farmers had the dual roles of patriotically complying with the draft law while increasing food production. In Kansas, this was synonymous with wheat production.

On April 13, 1917, the *Topeka Daily Capital* announced Capper’s formation of the Kansas Agricultural Defense Council. The objective of this agency, which morphed into the Kansas Council of Defense, was to work with Washington to conserve the food resources of the nation.² “Governor Capper will appoint, probably today, a state agricultural council of defense, in accordance with the recommendations made by the St.

¹ Letter, Governor Capper to Secretary of War Baker, 26 April 1917, Kansas Adjutant General Office, *Report Giving Expenditures and Registrations* “Selective Service,” (Topeka, 1919), 133, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

² “Kansas will have an Agricultural Defense Council,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 13, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1193817> (accessed October 22, 2014).

Louis conference held the first of the week to devise ways and means of coping with the food shortage.”³ The St. Louis Conference was a national food conference held by the federal government to outline tasks for individual states to initiate to combat an anticipated world food shortage, especially in war-torn Europe.⁴

Although the federal government held the conference in St. Louis and recommended that states establish civilian councils of their own to coordinate agriculture production, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reminded its readers that Governor Capper was the first to recognize the potential for a world-wide food shortage. Earlier, Capper had convened the Kansas Food Conference in March 1917 to address mobilizing Kansas’s agricultural resources and to urge the adoption of the movement nationwide.⁵ In other words, Capper started the movement of mobilizing national agricultural resources. “Other states followed suit and Secretary [of Agriculture] Houston called the big conference which met in St. Louis [April 9, 1917] last Monday.”⁶

Capper indicated in the *Topeka Daily Capital* that the information he had received from Washington concurred with his assessment that increasing food production was key. Raising an army was important, but the most important contribution to the war effort Americans could make at that time was producing food for the civilians and armies of Europe.⁷ Food production was the first priority addressed when the Kansas Council of Defense convened for its first formal meeting on April 17, 1917. Increasing food

³ Ibid.

⁴ H.J. Waters, “The Work of the Kansas Council of Defense,” in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, ed. Frank W. Blackmar, 17-20. (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), 17.

⁵ “Kansas will have an Agricultural Defense Council,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 13, 1917.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

production, especially wheat, continued to be a chief concern of Capper's throughout 1917, and it was what he saw as Kansas's most important contributory factor.

During the first formal meeting of the Kansas Council of Defense, Capper told the council members:

You have been called together to effect an organization known as the Kansas State Council of Defense, charged with organizing the resources of the nation. . . . The industries which supply food and clothing for the army and which sustain our people at home and help support our allies abroad, are rendering a service no less [noble] than that performed by our men in the field and on the sea. As a matter of fact we all recognize that the feeding of the famine-threatened world is the first and most important duty of loyal Americans.⁸

From the first meeting, Capper emphasized that farming was a befitting way to contribute to the war effort and just as important as military service, perhaps even more so, during a time when there was a fear of starvation in various parts of the world.

After stating his vision, Capper suggested that sub-committees be formed to deal with specific areas of agricultural concerns. Capper's goal was to link state and local concerns to overall national war planning. The core of Capper's address was his 12 "suggestions," which he believed should be the council members' immediate priorities. Several of these points resembled the recommendations of the Kansas Food Conference from the previous March, including how the state's bankers should cooperate with farmers by providing short term loans for seed and farm equipment necessary to increase operations and production. Likewise, Capper reinforced his original plan to encourage urban gardening to increase vegetable production.⁹

⁸ Arthur Capper, "Kansas Buckles on the Armor," *Addresses and Messages*, (Topeka, Kansas: Capper Printing Company, 1921), 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-4. This is all the detail that will be provided on the organization of the Kansas Council of Defense.

Capper also proposed a series of new suggestions, such as that the State Council should “encourage enlistment in the army and navy” and should also “co-operate with local Red Cross organizations.”¹⁰ Of the 12 suggestions made by Capper, only two related to farm labor and production. The first was point two, where Capper stated, “the farmers of Kansas must employ all labor-saving machinery that will enable them to plant and cultivate the larger acreage and more thoroly [*sic*] till and care for the acreage planted.”¹¹

The second of Capper’s suggestions which involved farm labor was point three, and he noted, “Every effort must be made to employ all available labor” in agricultural production. Capper communicated to the council members that in their efforts to encourage men to enlist in the military, it should be emphasized to those on the farm that tilling the soil and growing food was as noble as military service.¹²

At the time of the first meeting of the Kansas Council of Defense, the United States had been at war for less than two weeks and military service, specifically army service, was still voluntary. Capper remained fearful that volunteerism could have a negative impact on farm labor because of that labor enlisting for the duration of the war and restricting crop production on the home front. These sentiments were shared by President Wilson.¹³

Part of Capper’s opening address to the State Council showed that he had even more robust feelings on convincing farm labor, especially farm boys, to stay on the farm

¹⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

¹¹ Ibid., 3. Labor-saving machinery refers to tractors. The State Council recognized that the draft posed a problem when it came to tractor utilization which will be discussed further in the chapter.

¹² Ibid., 4.

¹³ Ibid. Capper had expressed this fear prior to American entry into the war in his April 5, 1917, address published in the *Olathe Daily Mirror*.

and not volunteer for military service. Capper stressed, “I believe that we should do our utmost to discourage the enlisting of farm boys and hired men [to join] the army or the navy. [We must convince them that] they can serve their country to vastly greater purpose on the farm than simply by carrying a gun and spending many months in a training camp.”¹⁴ Capper had emphasized that enlistment in the military should be a priority of the State Council, but he made clear that he believed their enlistment priorities should be focused on men in urban areas. Capper assumed that city dwellers would make a more valuable contribution to the nation in uniform than farm boys who were needed for producing crops.

If men were primarily drawn from farms, America could find itself in the same situation as Canada. It was reported in *Capper’s Weekly* that by April 1917 Canada was returning troops from France who had originally been conscripted from their agricultural sector. It was realized that these troops were needed back on the farm to produce food to feed their population and army. Canadians learned that farming was a unique skill set and the limited number of men with that specific skill set could not be readily replaced. Capper did not want to see a situation such as that develop in the United States. Consequently, Kansas farmers shared the governor’s position that soldiers should be drawn from the cities.¹⁵

Until the passage of the Selective Service Act, Capper continued to openly advocate for farm labor to stay on the farm, especially for farmers’ sons. Capper assumed that farm boys in particular would struggle with the decision to leave the farm and

¹⁴ “Kansas Food Drive is On,” *Capper’s Weekly*, April 21, 1917, p.1. This part of Capper’s address to the State Council was not printed in *Addresses and Messages*.

¹⁵ “Let Soldiers Come from Cities,” *Capper’s Weekly*, April 21, 1917, p. 1. England had learned this the previous year.

volunteer for the army, or stay and continue to serve in the furrow fields, which are trenches in the ground made by plows. Capper maintained that the right choice was the furrow fields.¹⁶ By this time, the word “slacker” had made its way into American lexicon to describe those who did not want to do their part for the war effort. Capper reiterated in the *Topeka Daily Capital* that work on the farm was nothing of the sort: “No man is a slacker who devotes his energy to increasing crop production in a state like Kansas on which the nation is depending upon for an ample supply of food.” More important, Capper believed, “Federal authorities as well as the state government recognize that the place for the farmer’s son is on the farm.”¹⁷

This could be interpreted two ways. First, Capper was attempting to convince young farmers that their service growing food was of equal importance as service in the army. Second, Capper had previously been informed by the War Department that a draft was inevitable, even if Congress had yet to pass the legislation.¹⁸ Ergo, he was emphasizing the necessity of keeping men on the farms because he feared a draft would induct critically needed agricultural workers. The question of whether men were more valuable on the farm than in the army became heated after the Selective Service Act was enacted into statute law and the matter of agricultural exemptions arose. The state’s farmers looked to Capper for assistance in this matter.

Writing in Frank W. Blackmar’s *History of the Kansas Council of Defense*, William. M. Jardine, dean of Kansas State Agricultural College, and L. E. Call explained

¹⁶ “Stay on the Farm is Message to Youths,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 11, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/64452838/> (accessed September 15, 2015). “Slacker” was not yet specifically used refer to men trying to evade the draft, because the Selective Service Act was not in effect. Capper advocated for farm labor to not volunteer, despite the fact he had earlier signaled reluctant support for a draft.

¹⁷ Ibid. Capper again emphasized his belief that soldiers should come from cities.

¹⁸ Letter, Governor Capper to Secretary of War Baker, 26 April 1917.

how utilizing the acreage of the lost winter wheat of the 1916-17 season was the most important duty of the State Council upon its organization. The council decided to evaluate the amount of idle land within each county and determine if farmers were planning on letting their acreage remain idle and become slackers in the public eye or make use of it to the best of their abilities by replanting it to spring crops. In order to determine farmer's attitudes, questionnaires were mailed to farmers, bankers, newspaperman, and anyone connected to agriculture in the state.¹⁹

The results of this questionnaire were reported in the *Parsons Daily Sun* on May 1, 1917, and the results were promising to Capper and the State Council. According to the *Daily Sun*, "The Kansas farmer will be no slacker in the World War. Out of the 1,791 replies to an inquiry mailed by the Kansas Council of Defense to men in [sic] every county of the state, 1,645 [replies] were to the effect that no cultivated land would lie idle after planting with the present forces available." The paper further noted, "One hundred fifteen more said that 'very little' would remain idle."²⁰

Farmers were willing to put in the extra work to increase production and do their part in winning the war. State and federal officials led farmers to believe that food production was the most important contribution as citizens they could make for the war effort. It was clearly the role Capper envisioned for the state's farmers. In his mind, farmers belonged in the fields and not the battlefields. Their skills were much more valuable towards winning the war in the furrow fields than in the trenches of France.

¹⁹ Wm. M. Jardine and L.E. Call, "A Summary of the Work of the Committee of Agricultural Production," in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, ed. Frank W. Blackmar, 36-48. (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printing Plant), 36. Depending on the source, Jardine was cited as either W.M. or Wm. M. Jardine.

²⁰ "Kansas Land will all be Used," *Parsons Daily Sun*, May 1, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/63094063/> (accessed August 24, 2015).

The willingness of Western Kansas farmers to increase food production was discussed in the *Alma Enterprise*. These farmers, who were hit hardest by the 1916-17 winter wheat failure, expressed their willingness to do their part before the State Council received the results of its questionnaire. The *Enterprise* reported, “Instead of sending resolutions of patriotic sentiment assuring the United States of its loyalty, Western Kansas will show its patriotism in a more practical way—by carrying out a campaign of diversified farming.” The paper informed readers, “Hundreds of acres of productive land, now with drought killed wheat, will be planted with corn, kaffir, and other spring crops.” The goal of Western Kansas farmers was “‘swatting’ the Kaiser by intensive farming” all the way to the Colorado border.²¹

Kansas farmers had no intention of slacking in their role of producing food. As Capper stated in yet another appeal to farmers on April 20, 1917, “There is no danger of overproduction, there will be an abundant need of all we can grow.”²² The farmers, especially the wheat growers, took their duty seriously in the overall campaign to win the war.

The result of this campaign to increase production was positive because most of the failed winter wheat acreage was successfully replanted with other grains. J.C. Mohler, who was serving in a dual capacity as secretary of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture and the Kansas Council of Defense, wrote that the replanting of other crops on failed wheat acreage was done to a very “marked degree.” There were nearly six million acres of wheat that failed in Kansas in the 1916-17 season; five million acres of this were

²¹ “Western Kansas to Show its Patriotism by Pushing Big Crop Drive,” *Alma Enterprise*, April 20, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2969983> (accessed August 7, 2015).

²² “Still urging more crops,” *Alma Enterprise*, April 20, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2969983> (accessed August 7, 2015).

replanted to spring crops with the most prevalent being corn.²³ Combined with the acreage already planted to corn, this brought the total to 9,162,232 acres.²⁴ In other words, approximately two million more acres were planted than had been planted in 1916.²⁵ This was the largest acreage of corn planted in Kansas up to that point.

The message in the spring of 1917 was clear; corn was less desirable during war time than wheat because it did not feed as many people, but it assisted the war effort nonetheless. Kansas farmers were not slackers when it came to increasing production and dutifully answered the call by the most efficient means possible when they replanted their failed wheat acreage. It was no easy task, but something that had to be accomplished, because farmers were being counted on to produce as much food as possible to feed the world. Suspicion of farmers as slackers at this time was largely non-existent; however, that changed after the Selective Service Act became law on May 18, 1917. Farmers began to worry about the labor necessary to meet the current season's harvest of wheat.

Chapter Three discussed the possibility of not having a sufficient amount of labor to conduct a successful wheat harvest in 1917 because of the draft. Even with simple volunteerism, Capper had worried about the scarcity of farm labor. With the passage of the Selective Service Act in May 1917 and draft registration occurring in June, the same month as the beginning of the wheat harvest in Kansas, the loss of agricultural labor was a concern.

²³ Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*, "Preface," (Topeka: Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1917), x-xi. Other spring crops included oats, barley, and sorghum.

²⁴ Ibid., "Tables and Yields Showing Comparative Yields of Field Crops, Assessed Valuation, Population, and State Summaries," *Table Showing State Summary, 1917*, 596.

²⁵ Ibid., "Preface," xi. A more detailed analysis is not necessary because the purpose here is simply to illustrate that farmers who had lost their wheat did not let the land lie idle.

In addition to regularly employed farm labor, which for the purposes of this thesis includes any farmers' sons working the family farm, harvest labor or harvest hands were also employed during seasonal periods. According to Thomas D. Isern in *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs*, harvest labor was understood to be a transient labor pool of men that migrated from May to October in the Great Plains to assist in the harvesting and threshing of wheat, and they provided the bulk of the labor. Farmers, regular farm labor, and harvest hands often worked alongside each other to gather wheat.²⁶ A further discussion of types of farm labor or their management is not necessary for this thesis.

Any fear that the draft would negatively affect the wheat harvest in 1917 was unfounded. According to the *Great Bend Tribune*, "Now that the wheat harvest is practically completed in Kansas, the state labor department is preparing to divert hundreds of harvest hands who had been busy in the fields the last few weeks to other channels of work. Clearly, the *Tribune* noted, "the harvest went off with a minimum of trouble regarding the [farm] labor supply."²⁷ Kansas had enough harvest laborers to gather its wheat and there was such an abundance of men that arrangements had been made to send that labor on to other states, such as Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming.²⁸

Halfway through the harvest, it was evident that there would not be a shortage of labor. This was the lowest demand for farm labor in 16 years. The *Topeka Daily Capital* reported that C. H. Danner, superintendent of the state labor bureau, claimed, "This year

²⁶ Thomas D. Isern, *Bull Threshers & Bindlestiffs: Harvesting and Threshing on the North American Plains*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1990), 130-131. Harvesting was the gathering and stacking of grain (wheat). Threshing was breaking loose the kernels of grain from the straw. Although technically distinct, by World War I, "harvest labor" described men who did both tasks, 2.

²⁷ "Wheat Harvest is Over," *Great Bend Tribune*, July 11, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2984086> (accessed August, 9 2015).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

the bureau received requests for only 7,500 men, the second smallest number since the bureau was organized in 1901. Cheyenne, Thomas, Rice, McPherson, Stafford, Reno, Kiowa, Pratt, Kingman, and Barber counties were the only districts asking Mr. Danner for any help.”²⁹

To provide a comparison between previous war years, in the summer of 1914 Kansas utilized an extra 75,000 harvest hands to supplement regularly employed farm labor, and in 1916 an additional 45,000.³⁰ In retrospect it should have been apparent that with only 3,528,609 acres of winter wheat in the state that had survived to be harvested in 1917, there would not be a high demand for harvest hands, and any negative effect caused by the draft would be reduced.³¹ Following the harvest, farmers began to think of fall planting and draft exemptions for the 1917-18 wheat season.

When men began to be drafted in July 1917, officials noticed that farmers were requesting a larger number of exemptions from the draft boards than men of other industries, based on the fact they were being depended upon to work on the farm. Articles appeared in newspapers that highlighted exemption requests from farmers and reminded these men that these requests would not be considered if it was found they were a “slacker farmer.” According to the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, “The exemption boards, it is said, will inquire [*sic*] carefully into the claims of the man who wants to be exempted, and if it is found that he is a ‘slacker’ in his work, he will be taken from the farm and sent to war.” In this way, it was hoped by draft officials to separate the farmers

²⁹ “Few Harvest Hands are Used,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 2, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3050833> (accessed August 19, 2015).

³⁰ *Ibid.* 1914 was the largest wheat harvest in Kansas history at that point producing 181,000,000 bushels.

³¹ *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, “Crop and Live-stock Statistics, 1917 and 1918,” *Table Showing Winter Wheat, 1917*, 598. It should be noted that the first draft lottery did not take place until July 20, 1917, after the harvest in Kansas was completed.

who were putting their full effort into food production from those who were simply trying to evade army service by “hiding” behind agricultural necessity.³²

Even though farmers, especially in wheat-producing counties, had already done their utmost to increase production by replanting lost wheat acreage to corn, it was assumed early in the draft that some farmers were going to use “the farm” as an excuse to avoid army service. This mindset had a special emphasis towards “farmers’ sons,” who were prime targets for the slacker label, being more likely to fall within the age limits of the draft. The *Evening Kansan-Republican* described several definitions of a slacker to their readers, one of which was, “a slacker is a farmer who demands that his sons may stan [*sic*] on the farm, while the sons of widows go to the front, to posts of danger.”³³

Starting in July 1917, Capper started to receive requests for draft exemptions, primarily for dependency-based claims.³⁴ An article in the *Fort Scott Tribune and the Fort Scott Monitor* highlighted this trend by noting, “Scores of letters are coming to Governor Capper from mothers and wives of young men drafted for service in the army, pleading with him to help them in securing exemptions.” If that was not enough, the paper noted, “These appeals, many of them, are pathetic, and some are based on sound justice and reason and should have consideration from the local and appeal boards.”³⁵

Often those appeals reached Capper’s office in a round-about manner, which was a consequence of the confusing nature of the draft. The public, especially farmers, sought

³² “Must Be a Real Farmer,” *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, July 18, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/59646694/> (accessed September 29, 2014).

³³ “Definitions of a Slacker,” *Evening Kansan-Republican*, August 7, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3396899> (accessed October 12, 2015).

³⁴ “Pleas for Exemption,” *Fort Scott Tribune and the Fort Scott Monitor*, July 27, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/59951173/> (accessed December 8, 2014). A dependency claim was based on the fact that a man had a wife or family at home dependent on his income for financial support.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

remedies to keep themselves, their sons, or their employees on the farm at a time when many Americans, especially urban residents, considered those not in uniform as slackers. The hastily thrown together draft regulations made it unclear to citizens that it was the local and district draft boards to which they should direct their complaints and questions. Consequently, complaints over the draft often reached Capper's ears, and these often came from farmers, wives, and mothers. Constituents believed that Capper could and would provide assistance by overruling the decision of the local or district draft board that had denied their exemption claims. In reality, the governor was prevented by law from interfering in the decisions of any draft board.³⁶ Nevertheless, Capper continued to receive appeals for draft exemptions.

Despite his lack of formal power in the draft process, Capper voiced his opinion that there were genuine exemption cases which should be given consideration by draft boards: "Take for example, a young man with a wife and children who is a renter. It would be manifestly unfair to send him to the front and leave his wife and child without support. This class of our young men are needed at home, whether they are located on farms, or are wage earners."³⁷

Capper gave validity to dependency claims, but implied that many of the claims that had come to his attention were in fact coming from men also located on farms. Capper hinted at the questions of: if these men were drafted, and their land was not worked as a result, then who would be responsible for the financial support and care of their families? Who would fill in as a "wage-earner" on a farm or rural economic

³⁶ Ibid. The only formal power Capper had over draft boards was recommending appointments to the president.

³⁷ Ibid.

concern? Granting a farmer a dependency exemption solved the dual problems of the financial support for farm families and the issue of ensuring maximum food production by rural America. Capper believed this was paramount for agricultural security during the war.

Although the article, “Pleas for Exemption,” did claim some appeals were based on reason and had reinforced Capper’s earlier opinion on the subject, the overall tone was hostile to those who sought out the governor for assistance with exemptions. This was especially true for those men who were farmers and had either appealed to Capper or had a family member appeal on their behalf, because operating the farm was dependent on the drafted man’s labor. The article pointed to one letter from Mrs. A. G. Schneck of Altamont, Kansas who had, “two sons – their only support—and both boys have been drawn in the draft. ‘If there is any way under God’s green earth to exempt them, I will pray you will do so.’” The letter noted, “Each of the boys is married and one has two little children. Their father says that if they take his boys, he has nothing to work for, as those boys are exceptions and are needed on the farm.”³⁸

Fathers being dependent on their sons’ labor on the farm illustrated the friction concerning the Selective Service System during this period. Many fathers actually owned the farm land, but due to age or other ailments were dependent on their sons for assistance. Naturally, parents were concerned that if their son was not granted an agricultural exemption, the farm would no longer be able to function. Such was the case with Mrs. A.G. Schneck’s farm.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

According to *Capper's Weekly*, the two district draft boards in Kansas that were responsible for appeals and agricultural exemptions recognized that farmers deserved special consideration, often due to the father-son relationship in running the farm. But they also clarified that farming in and of itself was not grounds for being exempted from the draft. The claimant needed to prove he was critical to farming operations, whether it was his own farm, his employer's, or his father's. The only way to do this was to examine each individual claim. The complexities of the system were noted in *Capper's Weekly*:

It must be shown, not merely that an applicant for exemption, is engaged in farming, but that his employment is necessary to the operation of the farm, and that he cannot be replaced by someone else without substantial loss. This probably means that young married farmers who are running their own farms, either owned or rented and whose families are dependent on them for support, and young men whose father or mother or both are dependent on them for support, will be exempted, but there will be no general exemption of men employed on farms.⁴⁰

In order for a claimant to prove that his labor was essential, he had to present two affidavits justifying his claim. The affidavits could not come from relatives or those who profited from a man's agricultural exemption.⁴¹

One can imagine how overwhelmed district boards became hearing individual agricultural exemption claims on a case by case basis. These were in addition to other exemption cases district boards reviewed from registrants seeking appeals from local draft board rulings that were non-job-related, such as spousal dependency claims. Of course, simply because a farmer had two affidavits did not mean his claim was going to be stamped as valid and an exemption granted; merely that was the minimum requirement for a man seeking an agricultural exemption. Draft boards continued to

⁴⁰ "Exempt Farmer Only When He Can't Be Spared," *Capper's Weekly*, August, 11, 1917, p.1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

wrestle with this problem, while trying to resolve the issue in a non-discriminatory way, as they limited criteria to adequately adjudicate them by the federal government.

By August 1917 farmers were more vocalized about the necessity of agricultural exemptions. The *Arkansas City Daily Traveler* published the fact that Wabaunsee County, Kansas farmers were demanding that rural districts be exempted from the draft. “Farmers in Waubensee [*sic*] County are circulating a petition to President Wilson demanding that the draft law be not [*sic*] enforced, or they will not increase their wheat acreages.” Farmers, according to *Daily Traveler*, “are short of reliable labor for farm work and that increasing the wheat acreage means greater demands for labor to take care of the crop.”⁴² Obviously, because of the draft, these farmers did not believe the necessary labor was going to be available to successfully meet increased wheat production goals.

Actions such as these did not portray farmers as willing to serve if called upon and helped contribute to the notion that farmers were slackers on the draft. Wabaunsee County farmers, with their demand for a blanket exemption because of their occupation, did not represent every farmer in Kansas. But it was likely that farmers as a socio-economic unit believed agricultural exemptions should be given greater consideration due to the expectations being placed upon them to increase wheat production for the war effort.

As early as June 1917 Capper had called a meeting of the Kansas Council of Defense, according to the *Topeka Daily Capital*, and he and the council members made it known that Kansas farmers were expected to plant 10,000,000 acres of wheat that fall.

⁴² “Farmers Sfeare [*sic*] Draft Effect,” *Arkansas City Daily Traveler*, August 13, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/53633750/> (accessed December 8, 2014).

The State Council admitted this would be a difficult task because of the expense of wheat seed, and “the tendency is already manifest to reduce rather than increase the acreage next fall.”⁴³ The price of seed, however, would not be a factor if the draft was going to create a shortage of labor that was needed for the planting and harvesting of wheat. It was this concern that caused angst among Wabaunsee County farmers who so bluntly expressed their desire for draft exemptions by circulating a petition. Farmers were expected to patriotically increase production, serve in the army if called upon, and/or give up their labor to the army if those men were drafted. From the farmer’s perspective, it was a difficult position with no logical solution in sight.

Farmers statewide were worried about losing their laborers to the draft, but this was especially true when the laborers in question were their own sons, who were especially prized during fall planting of wheat. Capper shared this fear and expressed it to President Wilson in a letter, telling Wilson he was receiving hundreds of letters on the subject. Capper’s letter to Wilson was published in *Capper’s Weekly* in August 1917:

It is imperative I believe that the federal government give immediate consideration to the danger now threatening the agricultural output of America in 1918 by reason of successive drafts for the army. I speak with authority particularly of conditions in the middle west, where the first draft will reduce materially the amount of wheat to be planted next fall unless immediate action be taken to exempt farmers’ sons. It should be understood that these men are not disposed to evade army service. They have been led to believe that the producing in Kansas of 10 million acres of wheat next year, the amount demanded by the State Council of Defense, will constitute a patriotic service for humanity as magnificent as anything they might do in the trenches....⁴⁴

At the minimum, Capper believed that it was necessary to provide farmers’ sons with an automatic draft exemption in order to ensure the productive planting of wheat in

⁴³ “Big Job in Increasing Kansas Wheat Acreage,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 27, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=3110669> (accessed December 8, 2014).

⁴⁴ “Keep the Efficient Farmers,” *Capper’s Weekly*, August 18, 1917, p. 5.

the fall. But he also believed that exempting these “boys” simply until fall planting was completed would be pointless, because their services were still necessary for the harvest. “Urged by the State Council of Defense to strain every resource to the end [so] that Kansas may produce 200 million bushels of wheat in 1918, these farmers now find themselves numbered among those drawn for army service, which means, obviously, that they will not be here to harvest the wheat which they are asked to plant.”⁴⁵

Capper understood the necessity of keeping farm laborers in place, regardless of whether the laborers were the sons of fathers dependent on their labor or hired hands. What was paramount in Capper’s mind was for wheat farmers to have a steady supply of labor to call upon as needed. Unfortunately, Capper was also caught in a bind. He wanted to assist farmers with their labor concerns because it was crucial for wheat production, but he was also duty-bound as governor to support the draft and draft boards’ decisions.

The *Topeka Daily Capital* sought to sooth the fears of urban Kansans who believed farmers as a whole wanted blanket exemptions. According to the *Daily Capital*, this was not the case and the paper assured readers that farmers understood the principles of the draft, and that class exemptions were out of the question. A patriotic farmer did not want another man to do his fighting for him. Nor were farmers [as a whole] asking for special considerations for their sons in the draft.⁴⁶ In the same article, however, the *Daily Capital* wanted its readers to acknowledge the farmers’ side of the equation when it came to the drafting of men into the army, “It would be folly now for the government to hamper the agricultural districts in their effort to produce the maximum amount of

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “Kansas Farmers and the Draft,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 16, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/63289513/> (accessed December 8, 2014).

foodstuffs during the coming year...we cannot afford to drain the farms of necessary labor [by drafting men].”⁴⁷

Farmers recognized that class exemptions stereotyped them as unpatriotic and, as a group, were not asking for them. What was being asked for by farmers was “common sense” judgements by district draft boards when making their selection and exemption decisions. If a man from the farm was necessary for increasing food production, then he was worthy of exemption. If he was not, then he could perform a service to the nation in the army.⁴⁸ This was how the draft machine was supposed to operate. In practice, however, draft boards were often overwhelmed with claims and lacked the time to properly examine each one.⁴⁹

Another possible reason why there was a focus on farmers’ sons concerning draft exemptions was that in addition to being depended on for their overall labor by their fathers, for the farms which utilized tractors, the son was often the operator.⁵⁰ This was important because, according to Robert N. Pripps, the tractor was long advocated as a way to increase production at a time when horses were being commandeered for the war effort.⁵¹ Capper had endorsed the use of labor-saving machinery, such as tractors, during his opening address of the State Council in April.

There was a wide range of tractor models utilized by farmers during World War I, but the Kansas State Board of Agriculture did not include a numeration of available

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 189. They also had no set criteria to utilize to make an impartial decision.

⁵⁰ Wm. M. Jardine and L.E. Call, “A Summary of the Work of the Committee of Agricultural Production,” in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, 46.

⁵¹ Robert N. Pripps and Andrew Morland, *Farmall Tractors*, (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1993), 29. Andrew Moreland was the photographer for this work.

tractor types in their *Twenty-First Biennial Report*. Instead, the state only counted the number of actual tractors in Kansas. According to the state report, by March 1, 1917, there were 4,504 tractors in Kansas.⁵² The Kansas Council of Defense believed there was some linkage between the operating of a tractor and farmers' sons, and noted that there were nearly 4,000 tractors in the state operated by the "owners or owners' sons."⁵³ Likewise, Kansas "had contributed no less than 40,000 men to the army and the navy." It was assumed that, "half of these men were of the farm." The State Council estimated that at least one out of every ten of these men had the skills to run a tractor which meant nearly 2,000 tractor operators were now gone. Therefore, there was an unmet need for personnel to operate those machines.⁵⁴

Even though not every tractor operator in the state had been selected by a draft board, even a loss of one out of ten men was enough to concern the State Council. Their main task was to ensure maximized food production, and trained tractor operators were not common on the farm, a fact which was reinforced by Edward Henley, a farmer, in a letter to the *Wichita Daily Eagle*. Henley specifically noted that the skill set to run a tractor was rare, and indicated that retaining those men was critical. He wrote, "It takes a real live experienced man to handle six horses in a team. And it takes even more experience, as other farmers have pointed out, to handle the modern tractor equipment."⁵⁵

⁵² *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, "Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1917 and 1918," *Table showing Cream Separators, Silos, and Tractors*, 696. The *Twentieth Biennial Report* did include pros and cons of different tractor types, but these will not be examined.

⁵³ Wm. M. Jardine and L.E. Call, "A Summary of the Work of the Committee of Agricultural Production," in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, 46. The fact that the State Council did not list tractor models is evidence that type did not play a role in this linkage.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "Farmers and the Draft," *Wichita Daily Eagle*, August 17, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/63771034/> (accessed December 4, 2014). It is interesting that neither Henley nor the Kansas Council of Defense mentioned price as a factor in obtaining a tractor, which leads one to believe that the major obstacle was a lack of skilled operators.

The purchase of a tractor assisted in increasing production, but only if the men trained to operate it were not drafted.

The tractor was used for a variety of tasks on the farm, but a questionnaire mailed to farmers determined that over fifty percent of its use was dedicated to plowing the fields.⁵⁶ It was also recognized that tractors were more efficient than horses. The *Wichita Daily Eagle* quoted Jardine of the agricultural college and member of the Kansas Council of Defense as saying, “a tractor of sufficient horsepower to pull a 4-bottom plow...will plow from ten to fifteen acres of land a day. A man with a 4 horse team can plow four to five acres a day.”⁵⁷ It is easy to understand why tractors were advocated as a means to increase food production in order to compensate for the labor that had been drafted or enlisted in the military. With proper utilization, a tractor could easily increase wheat acreage.

Beginning in late 1917, as tractor sales gradually increased, the State Council observed that the types of tractors being purchased were of the 10-20 size instead of the larger 20-40 gas tractor which had previously dominated purchases. It was reasoned that this was because smaller tractors were more efficient for “Kansas conditions.”⁵⁸ It was also noticed that tractors with a two- to three-plow capacity were in higher demand, and that the ideal tractor was “one that could be started easy and operated by boys under the

⁵⁶ J.C. Mohler, “Horse and Machine Power Committee,” in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, ed. Frank W. Blackmar, 52-55. (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), 52.

⁵⁷ “Tractors to do the Work,” *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 31, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=2982558> (accessed August 9, 2015).

⁵⁸ Wm. M. Jardine and L.E. Call, “A Summary of the Work of the Committee of Agricultural Production,” in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, 46. There was a movement in Kansas to instruct young boys, women, and elderly farmers on how to properly operate tractors in order to replace those who had gone into the army. This is outside the bounds of this thesis and will not be discussed further.

draft age.”⁵⁹ This indicated that tractor owners believed the draft would conscript those already of age and that smaller tractors were more easily handled by a young boy than a larger size was. One of the most popular small tractors was the Fordson Tractor, which was mass produced by Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan beginning in 1917.⁶⁰ A further discussion of tractor efficiency will not be undertaken in this thesis, because the relevant point was to demonstrate how and why a tractor could replace some of the labor of the men in the fields who were drafted and not exempted.

By September 1917 Capper started to receive letters from citizens reporting slackers throughout the state. Capper maintained those letters in his “slacker files.” According to Homer Socolofsky, Capper was accused of not doing enough to address these concerns himself, instead, he opted to forward the accusations to U. S. District Attorney Fred Robertson in Kansas City to investigate.⁶¹ In spite of this lack of action by Capper, citizens continued to send him slacker accusations, several of these concerned farmers and their perceived lack of patriotism compared to the rest of the population. However, only two letters that mentioned farmers and the draft were found in the slacker files for 1917. The first came from Rev. H. D. Todd of Altamont, Kansas, who claimed, “We know that you are a busy man, but we ask enoug [*sic*] of your time to answer us about what can be done about a man [a farmer] who is constantly saying he does not care if the American Govt. goes to pieces?...He has a boy subject to the draft.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Isern, *Bull Threshers & Bindlestiffs*, 177.

⁶¹ Homer Socolofsky, *Arthur Capper: Publish, Politician, and Philanthropist*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1962), 101. Accusations in the slacker files are centered on unpatriotic speech, failure to buy liberty bonds, crop hoarding, and failure to comply with the draft. Only those accusations which accused farmers of slacking the draft will be discussed.

⁶² Letter, H.D. Todd to Governor Capper, 26 September 1917, Box 36, Folder 11, Arthur Capper Governor’s Office 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, www.kansasmemory.org/item/212615/page/24 (accessed May 5, 2015).

It is not known if Todd's specific claim was true, but if so, a possible reason this farmer may have uttered ill words of the government was because he was upset that his son might be drafted and he would be unable to run the farm to full production. Anger over the draft was certainly the implication left by Todd with his closing sentence. Regardless, Todd's letter showed that farmers were under enough scrutiny that men like Todd felt warranted to inform the government.

Judging by his response to Todd, Capper did not give the accusation much credence, failing to respond to the fact that the farmer had a son subject to the draft entirely. Instead, Capper advised Todd to write Fred Robertson, after which, "The farmer probably would change his mind and decide that he does care something for the American government."⁶³ That was the end of the matter for Capper.

The second letter Capper received came from J. L. Justice, a man who operated a grain elevator in Gove County, Kansas. Capper wrote to Robertson in Kansas City about the information he had received. Quoting Justice, Capper claimed, "He said that Ernest Bush, who works for Andy Ferrano, a farmer 14 miles south of Buffalo Park, in Gove County had failed to register."⁶⁴ This again was the end of the matter for Capper.

The fact that there were only two letters within Capper's Office Records related to farmers being draft slackers in 1917 was telling. Farmers were under scrutiny when it came to the draft, but the governor's office was not flooded with reports that farmers had failed to register or were deceitful on exemption claims. However, the general

⁶³ Letter, Arthur Capper to H.D. Todd, 29 October 1917, Box 36, Folder 11, Arthur Capper Governor's Office 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, www.kansasmemory.org/item/212615/page/31 (accessed May 5, 2015).

⁶⁴ Letter, Arthur Capper to Fred Robertson, 12 October 1917, Box 36, Folder 11, Arthur Capper Governor's Office 1915-1919, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, www.kansasmemory.org/item/212615/page/26 (accessed May 8, 2015).

assumption on the part of the public appeared to be that farmers *wanted* to be slackers when it came to the draft and avoid service if at all possible. Even if a farmer was not granted an agricultural exemption, the request for one was enough to raise suspicions of being unpatriotic. It was this suspicion that was expressed in newspapers that portrayed farmers as “pathetic” simply for inquiring about an exemption.⁶⁵

Other articles highlighted farmers such as those in Wabaunsee County, who did advocate for class-based exemptions, and gave credibility to the viewpoint that farmers wanted to be slackers on the draft.⁶⁶ Farmers had to go a step beyond citizens of other industries to show that they were as patriotic as everyone else.

Regardless of the reasoning, there was a public belief among some Kansans that farmers were looking for an excuse not to serve if called. This was why farmers had to find ways to clarify their positions on exemptions with newspaper articles that expressed their desire for “common sense” not “class” based exemptions from the draft.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, U. S. Representative Dudley Doolittle did not appear to be aware of this problem, and his efforts helped solidify the belief that all farmers wanted blanket draft exemptions.

Dudley Doolittle, a Democrat, representing the Kansas Fourth Congressional District, proposed an amendment to the Selective Service Act that offered a blanket agricultural exemption that Kansas farmers did not appreciate. According to the *Topeka Daily Capital*, the amendment read in part, “Persons who are now, or were on the first

⁶⁵ “Pleas for Exemption,” *Fort Scott Tribune and the Fort Scott Monitor*, July 27, 1917.

⁶⁶ “Farmers Sfeare [sic] Draft Effect,” *Arkansas City Daily Traveler*, August 13, 1917.

⁶⁷ “Kansas Farmers and the Draft,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 16, 1917.

day of March 1917, actually engaged in farming or the raising of livestock as a chief occupation, shall be exempt from the selective service herein prescribed.”⁶⁸

At the time, Kansas farmers were attempting to make the public aware of the need for select agricultural exemptions from draft boards, not blanket exemptions that had made the public suspicious of their patriotism. These select exemptions were to be granted only after careful consideration of the impact a man’s claim had on the farm and overall production. As a class, farmers were willing to do their part for the war, including army service if selected.⁶⁹

Doolittle’s logic was not flawed in proposing to exempt farmers as a protected class, especially because both the federal and Kansas governments had emphasized the significance of food production after the United States entered the war. Doolittle claimed that the automatic exemption of “bona fide” farmers would not decrease the number of men available for the army, because the draft would simply induct men from “less productive” occupations, which were not critical to winning the war.⁷⁰

Doolittle’s principal argument was in line with Capper’s stated position. Both advocated that farmers be given special consideration in the draft because food production was a national necessity. The difference was in their approach. With Capper’s public comments and his interactions with Wilson on the issue, he was careful to frame his opinion on the matter as a plea or suggestion and not a demand. Capper had taken this approach in his letter to Wilson in August 1917, where he made a strong case for granting

⁶⁸ “Doolittle Proposes to Exempt all Farmers,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 10, 1917, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=1397614> (December 8, 2014).

⁶⁹ “Kansas Farmers and the Draft,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 16, 1917.

⁷⁰ “Doolittle Proposes to Exempt all Farmers,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 10, 1917. Doolittle did not give examples of these less-productive occupations.

exemptions to farmers but certainly did not demand that it be done.⁷¹ This was a significant distinction because a plea or suggestion implied that even though one may not be happy with a policy, they would still respect it. Capper communicated his disapproval of existing draft policies concerning granting agricultural exemptions, but the bottom line was that as a governor he was duty-bound to accept the decisions of the draft boards and President Wilson, a mindset that Capper made known.

An article published in the *Topeka Daily Capital* during the period when Doolittle's amendment was proposed described Capper's reaction to the fact that his office continued to be bombarded with draft appeals:

Streams of callers continue to visit Governor Capper's office at the state house to plead with him to aid them in securing exemptions for young men on the farms. Every day dozens of farmers, mothers and wives of young men drafted for service in the army, come to Topeka to beseech the governor to do something to keep the boys on the farms where they are so greatly needed.... Governor Capper absolutely can do nothing in this matter. He has appealed frequently to the president and the secretary of war for a more liberal construction of the agricultural exemption.⁷²

Capper had appealed to Wilson concerning the status of farmers in the draft; aside from written appeals, he took an official trip to Washington D.C. in September 1917, in order to make his case for agricultural exemptions to the president in person. According to *Capper's Weekly*, during this meeting with Wilson, Capper did his utmost to advance the argument that "soldiers of industry" [farmers] were as important to winning the war as soldiers of the army. Because farmers were already trained to grow food, this skill set would be more useful to winning the war than new training as soldiers in the army.⁷³ The

⁷¹ "Keep the Efficient Farmers," *Capper's Weekly*, August 18, 1917.

⁷² "Exemptions in the Draft out of Governor's Hands," *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 28, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/64546466/> (accessed December 8, 2014).

⁷³ "Our Young Farmers Can't be Spared Nor Replaced," *Capper's Weekly*, September 29, 1917.

governor's argument was one that had been hammered time and time again. It was ridiculous to expect Kansas farmers to increase wheat production while continuing to hold draft levies and inducting men into the army who were farmers producing wheat.⁷⁴

One official who agreed with Capper, and whose opinion should be highlighted, was Herbert Hoover. In May 1917, Wilson created the position of Food Administrator and put Hoover in the post,⁷⁵ a position that was later formalized by Congress in August 1917 with the establishment of the U. S. Food Administration.⁷⁶ Hoover's support for Capper's efforts was published in *Cappers Weekly*: "food director and the 'man of the hour' in Washington, strongly commended Governor Capper's stand for keeping efficient young men on the farms. He welcomed the Kansas governor's efforts."⁷⁷ Much like Capper, Hoover believed the government's vision of the war should extend beyond building an army.⁷⁸

It was also quite the endorsement of Capper's position. As Food Director, Hoover and his agency were responsible for advocating food conservation and increased production nationally. In order to increase production, Hoover insisted that farmers be offered high market prices for their crops in order to incentivize them to plow more acreage. In the case of wheat, Hoover was responsible for a guaranteed government price fixed at \$2.20 per bushel for the 1918 crop, which indicated wheat production was a chief

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 117.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁷ "Our Young Farmers Can't be Spared Nor Replaced," *Capper's Weekly*, September 29, 1917. The government purchase of food stuffs was done by the U. S. Grain Corporation.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

priority.⁷⁹ Capper would have been hard-pressed to find a more credible federal official to support him on the matter.

Capper was only willing to go as far as advocating on behalf of farmers for draft exemptions to the president. In that regard, he never wavered throughout 1917. Capper lobbied and plead for policy changes to the draft law, but never demanded change or displayed outright hostility towards federal policy. Capper's lack of hostility extended to not making overt criticisms of a draft board's decisions if a board failed to grant an agricultural exemption, even if he personally disagreed. The closest Capper came to objecting to draft board rulings was stating that he did not believe the boards were always paying close enough attention to the president's orders that the status of dependents, not the fact of marriage, should be the primary basis for exemptions and that in some instances boards had drafted men whose wife and children were dependent. By September 1917, Capper had informed farmers that he had "exhausted every effort and can do no more" on changing agricultural exemption policy to be more favorable to their class.⁸⁰

Doolittle's amendment to the Selective Service Act was not a suggestion; he did not simply float the idea of blanket agricultural exemptions in newspapers. He took actual steps to make it a reality by proposing an amendment to the law, and for all intents and purposes, demanded farmers be granted blanket exemptions. Doolittle's approach on agricultural exemptions differed from Capper's approach because, unlike Capper, Doolittle served in the House of Representatives and could propose actual change to the Selective Service Act. Doolittle's effort, more than anything, helped paint farmers as

⁷⁹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 119.

⁸⁰ "Exemptions in the Draft out of Governor's Hands," *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 28, 1917.

slackers in the general public's perception concerning the draft, because it gave validation to the suspicion that they were lobbying for outright blanket exemptions in order to avoid being drafted into the army.

For instance, if Doolittle's amendment became enacted, then individuals such as A. J. Hines, whose opinion was published in the *Columbus Weekly Advocate*, would have had their viewpoint substantiated. Hines believed farmers as a class were advocating for special treatment to have their sons exempted from army service, even if they could afford to hire help that had the necessary skill set to perform farm work.⁸¹ Although he did not mention Doolittle or his amendment, he expressed his mindset on farmers and exemptions by writing, "it seem to me that any set of men who try and keep their sons out of the army are not only cowardly, but traitors to our country," which illustrated one of the stereotypes farmers sought to avoid.⁸²

The *Topeka Daily Capital* reported that farmers of Doolittle's own congressional district were outraged and worried that his actions would have them labeled as disloyal or "slackers by implication" by the public at large, even though there was not a "farm-boy slacker" in their ranks.⁸³ Distancing themselves from their representative, one Democrat of the Fourth Congressional District claimed, "This last effort by Mr. Doolittle was worse than cheap politics; it is nothing less than an insult to the loyal sons of that great agricultural section of our state."⁸⁴ Doolittle's constituents believed that trained farmers, or those whose parents were dependent on their labor, should be exempted, but that was a

⁸¹ "The Farmer Slacker," *Columbus Weekly Advocate*, September 13, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/80180211/> (accessed September 29, 2014).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ "Farmers Resent Latest Move made by Doolittle," *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 30, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/64546646/> (accessed September 15, 2014).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

far cry from the “wholesale” exemptions that he had proposed.⁸⁵ The message was clear, Kansas farmers did not desire blanket exemptions and were offended by the proposal, if only because it fed the stereotype that farmers were slackers.

Doolittle’s effort to obtain blanket agriculture exemptions in early September was no coincidence; September was the traditional time to begin planting the state’s winter wheat crop. A sufficient amount of wheat had to be planted in order to satisfy the production goals of Governor Capper, the Kansas Council of Defense, and the federal government. The world’s necessity for wheat justified Capper’s belief in agricultural exemptions. U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Houston published an appeal for Kansas to grow more wheat, which appeared in the *Topeka Daily Capital*. The appeal made clear how much faith was being placed in Kansas wheat growers by the rest of the nation and that it was hoped the state could reach the goal of planting 10,000,000 acres in the fall.⁸⁶

Prior to fall planting, there was concern expressed by farmers about being able to increase their wheat acreage because of the high cost of wheat seed, which the State Council had acknowledged.⁸⁷ Seed was selling from \$2.50 to \$3.00 a bushel at this time, a high price that was the result of the shortage of seed due to the previous season’s winter wheat failure. It was estimated that farmers in at least 40 Kansas counties required financial assistance with purchasing seed in order to plant in the fall of 1917.⁸⁸ In order to resolve this, the State Council, through its seed-wheat committee, purchased and held

⁸⁵ Ibid. Doolittle’s amendment failed and he lost re-election in 1918.

⁸⁶ “Ask Quick Action for Wheat Pool,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 28, 1917, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/63289664/> (accessed October 15, 2015).

⁸⁷ “Big Job in Increasing Kansas Wheat Acreage,” *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 27, 1917. Due to the winter wheat failure in the spring of 1917, farmers in several Kansas counties did not raise enough wheat to provide seed for planting in the fall of 1917. Farmers in these counties had little choice but to purchase seed in order to plant the expanded wheat acreage the government expected.

⁸⁸ Wm. M. Jardine and L.E. Call, “A Summary of the Work of the Committee of Agricultural Production,” in *History of the Kansas State Council of Defense*, 41-42.

large amounts of seed for use in these counties. At the same time, it allowed payment from farmers for the seed to be deferred until the 1918 harvest was completed. In this way farmers who were hesitant to buy seed because of the costs or resided in a county that did not have any available for purchase, were provided for and could plant that fall.⁸⁹

With the financial hesitation caused by the price of wheat seed resolved, along with the guaranteed price of \$2.20 per bushel for 1918, farmers were incentivized to plant more acreage for the 1917-18 season.⁹⁰ The other logical hesitation to putting wheat to ground that fall was the question of sufficient farm labor. So far, no specific numbers of men or locations have been used to illustrate why farmers were so worried about wheat production and the availability of farm labor as it pertained to draft policy. One instance that does illustrate this came in October 1917, when Capper received a letter from Edgar B. Corse of Kiowa County, Kansas.⁹¹ Corse's letter was the only personal one found in Capper's Office Records that specifically addressed the concerns farmers had with draft policy in 1917.⁹²

Corse began his letter to Capper by apologizing for offering his "humble suggestions" on the current food situation and draft policy, but because of the expected world food shortage in the coming months, he felt that he was justified in writing to the governor about the Kansas wheat situation as he saw it. "In support of my belief, I wish

⁸⁹ Ibid. The financial details of the seed wheat program will not be discussed further as they are not pertinent to this thesis.

⁹⁰ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 119.

⁹¹ This letter was also addressed to President Wilson, Herbert Hoover, and Francis C. Price, who was chairman of the Second district draft board.

⁹² This is interesting considering several newspaper articles utilized so far made reference the large numbers of written appeals Capper had received from farmers and their concerns over the draft in 1917.

to submit a few figures gathered from information of conditions here in my own county of Kiowa and I trust that they will not prove too dry for you [to] consider them.”⁹³

Corse noted that on September 21, 1917, twenty-one men from Kiowa County were ordered to report to Camp Funston, with eight of those men being “bona fide farmers.”⁹⁴ He claimed that these eight men alone had nearly “2,500 acres of land ready to sow to wheat, with the necessary teams, implements, seed and feed” to successfully plant and harvest the season’s crop.⁹⁵ At a minimum, Corse reasoned these eight men would have produced 31,250 bushels of wheat if they had not been drafted. The calculation was determined by assuming the eight men would have produced at least 12.5 bushels of wheat per acre, which Corse claimed was the county’s average since records began to be kept, although he also claimed production of 20 bushels per acre was possible.⁹⁶

Whether or not Corse was accurate with his statistics of numbers of men drafted and wheat acreage produced will not be determined. He certainly believed that they were and the important aspect for this thesis is Corse’s overall conclusion. If a wheat farmer was inducted into the army and his acreage was not planted, there would be less wheat grown at a time when the world was in desperate need of grain. A removal of eight farmers, a relatively small number of men, potentially resulted in the loss of thousands of bushels of wheat. This was just from one county in one of the nation’s largest wheat producing states, and certainly did not make sense during a time the federal government

⁹³ Letter, Edgar B. Corse to Honorable Woodrow Wilson, Arthur Capper, Herbert Hoover, and Francis C. Price, 11 October 1917, Box 15, Folder 2, Arthur Capper Governor’s Office 1915-1919, p. 1, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid. The possibility that another man could take over this acreage will not be discussed.

was encouraging maximum wheat production. Corse recognized this fallacy. It was illogical to expect increased wheat production if the farmers who grew grain were being reduced in order to fulfill army requirements. Capper had made similar claims to no avail, but Corse's letter demonstrates that the same fear Capper had on the relationship between the draft and wheat production was shared by those who grew wheat.

Corse also communicated to Capper that the induction of "bona fide" farmers into the army would continue to be a problem because of the composition of the county. The percentage of farmers was high enough, in Corse's opinion, that it was unlikely that a portion of the men inducted would not be farmers whenever a fresh draft levy was sent to a training cantonment from Kiowa County. In other words, farmers would always make up a portion of the draft quota. Corse noted, "I am informed and believe that of the nineteen men called to Camp Funston on October 6, 1917, the same percentage of bona fide farmers and their possible production [of wheat] would hold good, and the same would be true of those called from this county in the future."⁹⁷

The induction of "bona fide" farmers was not the only reason Corse gave to Capper for why the draft hampered wheat production. He was as concerned about the harvest in the summer as he was the planting in the fall and believed draft levies would as readily drain away seasonal harvest labor as easily as they did farmers. In Corse's opinion, this was the greater danger because while one man could sow or drill 300 acres of wheat by himself, it took six "experienced" men to successfully harvest and stack the same acreage.⁹⁸ Obviously, even if the counties' farmers were allowed to remain on their

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 2. Whether or not the composition of farmers in the county was so high that farmers would always constitute a large portion of draft levies will not be investigated.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

farms and successfully planted all available acreage to wheat, grain could still be lost because of the lack of labor to gather it in its entirety.

Corse understood that the bulk of harvest labor was migratory and came from outside of Kansas, noting, “We have been able to get this harvest help from the territory west and south of us where they grow only spring crops for the most part.” He assumed these men would be unavailable for hire as harvest labor in Kansas wheat fields because the draft boards whose jurisdiction they fell under would have called them to service by the time the harvest approached in 1918.⁹⁹ In short, Corse believed that even if Kansas draft boards granted an acceptable number of agricultural exemptions, this would make little difference in terms of the harvest because so many extra hands were required that outside help was needed. He did not believe enough labor was available in Kansas alone to conduct the harvest in normal years, let alone when a draft was underway.

A final concern Corse’s letter addressed was the matter of “bona fide farm laborers,” which he defined as men who were regularly employed in an agricultural enterprise.¹⁰⁰ In layman’s terms this was a man employed year round by a farmer as a hired hand. Although he did not discuss specifics, Corse made clear that the men who were employed as farm laborers, with their experience and skills in agriculture, were essential to the success of a farm, and if drafted, could not be replaced without “direct, substantial, material loss to agricultural production.”¹⁰¹

Unlike the farmers who had expressed disdain with Doolittle’s proposal of blanket agricultural exemptions, Corse believed that blanket exemptions were necessary

⁹⁹ Ibid. Whether this assumption was correct in its entirety will not be investigated.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.3.

if the United States was going to provide grain for its army and the armies of its Allies and noted, “What is true of my county of Kiowa is true no less of nearly every other county in the state of Kansas.”¹⁰² Corse expressed no fear of being labeled a slacker for stating his desire for blanket agricultural exemptions.¹⁰³

A response to Corse from Capper was not found in Capper’s Office Records, but based on Capper’s views discussed so far, it is unlikely he would have disagreed with any point Corse brought up. The details may have differed, but Capper had given the same justifications to President Wilson for keeping farmers and farm laborers out of the army, which was that it was illogical to draft the nation’s farmers, because it was the farmers who grew the food that fed the civilian and military populations.

Throughout the first call for troops in 1917, Capper performed his duties as governor while expressing his belief directly to Wilson that it was in the United States’ best interest to provide farmers with agricultural exemptions from the draft. This was not because Capper favored farmers as a class and wanted to avoid drafting them into the army, but rather because there was a genuine need to increase food production for the war effort, and Kansas wheat was needed to feed the world.¹⁰⁴ Farmers and farm laborers were the ones who planted and harvested wheat. Capper believed that more men of this class drafted into the army and not allowed to remain on the farm meant less wheat being produced. Likewise, farmers as a whole also believed that.

What urban residents saw as a “slacker farmer” was a farmer who believed their skill set was necessary in order to increase food production. Even the farmers who had

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰³ The fact that this letter was not meant for the general public may have played a part in this lack of fear.

¹⁰⁴ “Keep the Efficient Farmers,” *Capper’s Weekly*, August 18, 1917.

circulated the petition in Wabaunsee County, Kansas and demanded blanket draft exemptions had emphasized that this was being demanded only because of the fear that the draft was going to drain their access to farm labor, without which farmers believed they would be unable to successfully increase their wheat acreage as was being asked.¹⁰⁵

Kansas wheat growers did not plant the 10,000,000 acres of winter wheat that had been called for in the fall of 1917, but this threshold was nearly reached.¹⁰⁶ The Kansas State Board of Agriculture recorded that farmers planted 9,897,365 acres of wheat in 1917.¹⁰⁷ The planting of wheat in the fall of 1917 was undertaken in the midst of draft inductions. Despite being less than the 10,000,000-acre mark strived for by the Kansas Council of Defense and the federal government, the acreage was significant because it was more than the 9,587,721 acres planted in the fall of 1916 by approximately 310,000 acres.¹⁰⁸ During 1916 there was not a military draft draining the agriculture sector of men.¹⁰⁹

But this was not the end of the debate. The wheat that had been successfully planted in the fall of 1917 and Capper's concerns about the draft affecting productivity were unfounded at that time. But the grain still had to be harvested in 1918, which required larger amounts of labor, and the next season's wheat (1918-19) had to be planted in the fall. These events took place during continued draft calls by the War Department, which in 1918 adopted the classification system in order to draft or exempt the nation's

¹⁰⁵ "Farmers Sfeare [sic] Draft Effect," *Arkansas City Daily Traveler*, August 13, 1917.

¹⁰⁶ "Ask Quick Action for Wheat Pool," *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 28, 1917.

¹⁰⁷ *Twenty-First Biennial Report*, "Crop and Live-stock Statistics, 1917 and 1918," *Table showing Winter Wheat, 1918*, 600.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 598. As a reminder, winter wheat is planted in one year and harvested in the next year. The acreage in the fall of 1916 was harvested in 1917, making it the 1916-17 season.

¹⁰⁹ There were counties in Kansas that had reduced acreage sown to winter wheat and others which had increased acreage from the previous season. The acreage for individual counties will not be examined because the important aspect is that overall Kansas acreage was increased from the previous season.

men. An area for future research is the effect the classification system had on the wheat harvest in the summer of 1918, the planting of wheat that fall, and Capper's views on the classification system.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Selective Service Act of 1917

Appendix B: June 5, 1917 registration for Herbert Lee Hamilton

Appendix C: Kansas district draft board members

Appendix A:

Selective Service Act of 1917

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SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS. Sess. I., CH. 15, 1917.

May 18, 1917.
[H. R. 2545.]
[Public, No. 12.]
Army emergency in-
crease.

Maximum strength
to be immediately
raised, etc.
Vol. 32, p. 122.

Temporary appoint-
ments to fill Army
vacancies created
thereby.

Provisional appoint-
ments.
Vol. 32, p. 121.

Termination of.

National Guard and
Reserve, drafted into
service.
Vol. 32, p. 211.

Term of service.

Provis-
ions designated as re-
tained.

Additional 500,000 en-
listed men to be raised
by draft.
Foot, p. 694.

Selection of officers.

Vol. 32, p. 120.

Appointments, etc.
Vol. 32, p. 772.

Provis-
ions to correspond with
Army.
Changes of typical
organizations author-
ized.

CHAP. 15.—An Act To authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in view of the existing emergency, which demands the raising of troops in addition to those now available, the President be, and he is hereby, authorized—

First. Immediately to raise, organize, officer, and equip all or such number of increments of the Regular Army provided by the national defense Act approved June third, nineteen hundred and sixteen, or such parts thereof as he may deem necessary; to raise all organizations of the Regular Army, including those added by such increments; to the maximum enlisted strength authorized by law. Vacancies in the Regular Army created or caused by the addition of increments as herein authorized which can not be filled by promotion may be filled by temporary appointment for the period of the emergency or until replaced by permanent appointments or by provisional appointments made under the provisions of section twenty-three of the national defense Act, approved June third, nineteen hundred and sixteen, and hereafter provisional appointments under said section may be terminated whenever it is determined, in the manner prescribed by the President, that the officer has not the suitability and fitness requisite for permanent appointment.

Second. To draft into the military service of the United States, organize, and officer, in accordance with the provisions of section one hundred and eleven of said national defense Act, so far as the provisions of said section may be applicable and not inconsistent with the terms of this Act, any or all members of the National Guard and of the National Guard Reserves, and said members so drafted into the military service of the United States shall serve therein for the period of the existing emergency unless sooner discharged: *Provided,* That when so drafted the organizations or units of the National Guard shall, so far as practicable, retain the State designations of their respective organizations.

Third. To raise by draft as herein provided, organize and equip an additional force of five hundred thousand enlisted men, or such part or parts thereof as he may at any time deem necessary, and to provide the necessary officers, line and staff, for said force and for organizations of the other forces hereby authorized, or by combining organizations of said other forces, by ordering members of the Officers' Reserve Corps to temporary duty in accordance with the provisions of section thirty-eight of the national defense Act approved June third, nineteen hundred and sixteen; by appointment from the Regular Army, the Officers' Reserve Corps, from those duly qualified and registered pursuant to section twenty-three of the Act of Congress approved January twenty-first, nineteen hundred and three (Thirty-second Statutes at Large, page seven hundred and seventy-five), from the members of the National Guard drafted into the service of the United States, from those who have been graduated from educational institutions at which military instruction is compulsory, or from those who have had honorable service in the Regular Army, the National Guard, or in the volunteer forces, or from the country at large; by assigning retired officers of the Regular Army to active duty with such force with their rank on the retired list and the full pay and allowances of their grade; or by the appointment of retired officers and enlisted men, active or retired, of the Regular Army as commissioned officers in such forces: *Provided,* That the organization of said force shall be the same as that of the corresponding organizations of the Regular Army: *Provided further,* That the President is authorized to increase or decrease the number of organizations prescribed for the typical brigades, divisions, or army corps of the Regular Army, and to prescribe such new and different

organizations and personnel for army corps, divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions, squadrons, companies, troops, and batteries as the efficiency of the service may require: *Provided further*, That the number of organizations in a regiment shall not be increased nor shall the number of regiments be decreased: *Provided further*, That the President in his discretion may organize, officer, and equip for each Infantry and Cavalry brigade three machine-gun companies, and for each Infantry and Cavalry division four machine-gun companies, all in addition to the machine-gun companies comprised in organizations included in such brigades and divisions: *Provided further*, That the President in his discretion may organize for each division one armored motor-car machine-gun company. The machine-gun companies organized under this section shall consist of such commissioned and enlisted personnel and be equipped in such manner as the President may prescribe: *And provided further*, That officers with rank not above that of colonel shall be appointed by the President alone, and officers above that grade by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate: *Provided further*, That the President may in his discretion re-commission in the Coast Guard persons who have heretofore held commissions in the Revenue Cutter Service or the Coast Guard and have left the service honorably, after ascertaining that they are qualified for service physically, morally, and as to age and military fitness.

Fourth. The President is further authorized, in his discretion and at such time as he may determine, to raise and begin the training of an additional force of five hundred thousand men organized, officered, and equipped, as provided for the force first mentioned in the preceding paragraph of this section.

Fifth. To raise by draft, organize, equip, and officer, as provided in the third paragraph of this section, in addition to and for each of the above forces, such recruit training units as he may deem necessary for the maintenance of such forces at the maximum strength.

Sixth. To raise, organize, officer, and maintain during the emergency such number of ammunition batteries and battalions, depot batteries and battalions, and such artillery parks, with such numbers and grades of personnel as he may deem necessary. Such organizations shall be officered in the manner provided in the third paragraph of this section, and enlisted men may be assigned to said organizations from any of the forces herein provided for or raised by selective draft as by this Act provided.

Seventh. The President is further authorized to raise and maintain by voluntary enlistment, to organize, and equip, not to exceed four infantry divisions, the officers of which shall be selected in the manner provided by paragraph three of section one of this Act: *Provided*, That the organization of said force shall be the same as that of the corresponding organization of the Regular Army: *And provided further*, That there shall be no enlistments in said force of men under twenty-five years of age at time of enlisting: *And provided further*, That no such volunteer force shall be accepted in any unit smaller than a division.

Sec. 2. That the enlisted men required to raise and maintain the organizations of the Regular Army and to complete and maintain the organizations embodying the members of the National Guard drafted into the service of the United States, at the maximum legal strength as by this Act provided, shall be raised by voluntary enlistment, or if and whenever the President decides that they can not effectually be so raised or maintained, then by selective draft; and all other forces hereby authorized, except as provided in the seventh paragraph of section one, shall be raised and maintained by selective draft exclusively; but this provision shall not prevent the transfer to any force of training cadres from other forces. Such draft as

Regimental, retained.

Machine-gun companies.

Armored motor-car companies.

Personnel.

Appointment of officers.

Coast Guard. Former officers in may be re-commissioned.

Draft of additional 500,000 men for training.

Recruit training units.

Artillery organizations to be raised.

Personnel.

Volunteer infantry divisions authorized.

Process. Organization.

Enlistment age.

Acceptance limited.

Enlisted men. For Army and National Guard by voluntary enlistment or draft.

Other forces by draft.

Units of draft. See, pp. 225, 226.

herein provided shall be based upon liability to military service of all male citizens, or male persons not alien enemies who have declared their intention to become citizens, between the ages of twenty-one and thirty years, both inclusive, and shall take place and be maintained under such regulations as the President may prescribe not inconsistent with the terms of this Act. Quotas for the several States, Territories, and the District of Columbia, or subdivisions thereof, shall be determined in proportion to the population thereof, and credit shall be given to any State, Territory, District, or subdivision thereof, for the number of men who were in the military service of the United States as members of the National Guard on April first, nineteen hundred and seventeen, or who have since said date entered the military service of the United States from any such State, Territory, District, or subdivision, either as members of the Regular Army or the National Guard. All persons drafted into the service of the United States and all officers accepting commissions in the forces herein provided for shall, from the date of said draft or acceptance, be subject to the laws and regulations governing the Regular Army, except as to promotions, so far as such laws and regulations are applicable to persons whose permanent retention in the military service on the active or retired list is not contemplated by existing law, and those drafted shall be required to serve for the period of the existing emergency unless sooner discharged; *Provided*, That the President is authorized to raise and maintain by voluntary enlistment or draft, as herein provided, special and technical troops as he may deem necessary, and to embody them into organizations and to officer them as provided in the third paragraph of section one and section nine of this Act. Organizations of the forces herein provided for, except the Regular Army and the divisions authorized in the seventh paragraph of section one, shall, as far as the interests of the service permit, be composed of men who come, and of officers who are appointed from, the same State or locality.

Sec. 3. No bounty shall be paid to induce any person to enlist in the military service of the United States; and no person liable to military service shall hereafter be permitted or allowed to furnish a substitute for such service; nor shall any substitute be received, enlisted, or enrolled in the military service of the United States; and no such person shall be permitted to escape such service or to be discharged therefrom prior to the expiration of his term of service by the payment of money or any other valuable thing whatsoever as consideration for his release from military service or liability thereto.

Sec. 4. That the Vice President of the United States, the officers, legislative, executive, and judicial, of the United States and of the several States, Territories, and the District of Columbia, regular or duly ordained ministers of religion, students who at the time of the approval of this Act are preparing for the ministry in recognized theological or divinity schools, and all persons in the military and naval service of the United States shall be exempt from the selective draft herein prescribed; and nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in any of the forces herein provided for who is found to be a member of any well-recognized religious sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form and whose religious convictions are against war or participation therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organizations, but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be noncombatant; and the President is hereby authorized to exclude or discharge from said selective draft and from the draft under the second paragraph of section one hereof, or to draft for partial military service only from those liable to draft as in this

Determination of quotas. Post, p. 534.

Credits allowed for men in service.

Forces subject to Army laws, etc.

Promotions excepted.

Period of service. Fractions. Special and technical troops.

Local origin of forces to be considered.

Bounty and substitute prohibitions.

Exemptions from draft. Classes designated.

Religious exemptions.

Noncombatant service not included. Other exclusions.

Act provided, persons of the following classes: County and municipal officials; customhouse clerks; persons employed by the United States in the transmission of the mails; artificers and workmen employed in the armories, arsenals, and navy yards of the United States, and such other persons employed in the service of the United States as the President may designate; pilots; mariners actually employed in the sea service of any citizen or merchant within the United States; persons engaged in industries, including agriculture, found to be necessary to the maintenance of the Military Establishment or the effective operation of the military forces or the maintenance of national interest during the emergency; those in a status with respect to persons dependent upon them for support which renders their exclusion or discharge advisable; and those found to be physically or morally deficient. No exemption or exclusion shall continue when a cause therefor no longer exists: *Provided*, That notwithstanding the exemptions enumerated herein, each State, Territory, and the District of Columbia shall be required to supply its quota in the proportion that its population bears to the total population of the United States;

The President is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to create and establish throughout the several States and subdivisions thereof and in the Territories and the District of Columbia local boards, and where, in his discretion, practicable and desirable, there shall be created and established one such local board in each county or similar subdivision in each State, and one for approximately each thirty thousand of population in each city of thirty thousand population or over, according to the last census taken or estimates furnished by the Bureau of Census of the Department of Commerce. Such boards shall be appointed by the President, and shall consist of three or more members, none of whom shall be connected with the Military Establishment, to be chosen from among the local authorities of such subdivisions or from other citizens residing in the subdivision or area in which the respective boards will have jurisdiction under the rules and regulations prescribed by the President. Such boards shall have power within their respective jurisdictions to hear and determine, subject to review as hereinafter provided, all questions of exemption under this Act, and all questions of or claims for including or discharging individuals or classes of individuals from the selective draft, which shall be made under rules and regulations prescribed by the President, except any and every question or claim for including or excluding or discharging persons or classes of persons from the selective draft under the provisions of this Act authorizing the President to exclude or discharge from the selective draft "Persons engaged in industries, including agriculture, found to be necessary to the maintenance of the Military Establishment, or the effective operation of the military forces, or the maintenance of national interest during the emergency."

The President is hereby authorized to establish additional boards, one in each Federal judicial district of the United States, consisting of such number of citizens, not connected with the Military Establishment, as the President may determine, who shall be appointed by the President. The President is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to establish more than one such board in any Federal judicial district of the United States, or to establish one such board having jurisdiction of an area extending into more than one Federal judicial district.

Such district boards shall review on appeal and affirm, modify, or reverse any decision of any local board having jurisdiction in the area in which any such district board has jurisdiction under the rules and regulations prescribed by the President. Such district boards shall have exclusive original jurisdiction within their respective areas to hear and determine all questions or claims for including or excluding or discharging persons or classes of persons from the selective

Classes specified.

Post, p. 655.

Proviso.
Quotas not diminished.

Local draft boards created.

Appointment from local authorities, etc.

Jurisdiction as to exemptions, etc.

Persons in exempted industries accepted.
Supra.

District boards of appeals, etc.

Review of decisions of local board.

Original action as to exempted industries.

	draft, under the provisions of this Act, not included within the original jurisdiction of such local boards.
Finality of decisions, etc.	The decisions of such district boards shall be final except that, in accordance with such rules and regulations as the President may prescribe, he may affirm, modify or reverse any such decision.
Filling vacancies in boards.	Any vacancy in any such local board or district board shall be filled by the President; and any member of any such local board or district board may be removed and another appointed in his place by the President, whenever he considers that the interest of the nation demands it.
Rules and regulations of procedure, etc. to be made.	The President shall make rules and regulations governing the organization and procedure of such local boards and district boards, and providing for and governing appeals from such local boards to such district boards, and reviews of the decisions of any local board by the district board having jurisdiction, and determining and prescribing the several areas in which the respective local boards and district boards shall have jurisdiction, and all other rules and regulations necessary to carry out the terms and provisions of this section, and shall provide for the issuance of certificates of exemption, or partial or limited exemptions, and for a system to exclude and discharge individuals from selective draft.
Registration. Age limits. Proclamation for, on notice given by proclamation, etc. Post, p. 1024. Post, pp. 224, 225, 226.	SEC. 5. That all male persons between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, both inclusive, shall be subject to registration in accordance with regulations to be prescribed by the President; and upon proclamation by the President or other public notice given by him or by his direction stating the time and place of such registration it shall be the duty of all persons of the designated ages, except officers and enlisted men of the Regular Army, the Navy, and the National Guard and Naval Militia while in the service of the United States, to present themselves for and submit to registration under the provisions of this Act; and every such person shall be deemed to have notice of the requirements of this Act upon the publication of said proclamation or other notice as aforesaid given by the President or by his direction; and any person who shall willfully fail or refuse to present himself for registration or to submit thereto as herein provided, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction in the district court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, be punished by imprisonment for not more than one year, and shall thereupon be duly registered: <i>Provided</i> , That in the case of the docket precedences shall be given, in courts trying the same, to the trial of criminal proceedings under this Act: <i>Provided further</i> , That persons shall be subject to registration as herein provided who shall have attained their twenty-first birthday on or before the day set for the registration, and all persons so registered shall be and remain subject to draft into the forces hereby authorized, unless exempted or excused therefrom as in this Act provided: <i>Provided further</i> , That in the case of temporary absence from actual place of legal residence of any person liable to registration as provided herein such registration may be made by mail under regulations to be prescribed by the President.
Personal notice in-ferred.	
Punishment for not registering.	
Precedence. Precedence for trials. Age extent defined.	
Registration by mail.	
Utilization of departments, officers, etc.	SEC. 6. That the President is hereby authorized to utilize the service of any or all departments and any or all officers or agents of the United States and of the several States, Territories, and the District of Columbia, and subdivisions thereof, in the execution of this Act, and all officers and agents of the United States and of the several States, Territories, and subdivisions thereof, and of the District of Columbia, and all persons designated or appointed under regulations prescribed by the President whether such appointments are made by the President himself or by the governor or other officer of any State or Territory to perform any duty in the execution of this Act, are hereby required to perform such duty as the President shall order or direct,
Duty compulsory.	

and all such officers and agents and persons so designated or appointed shall hereby have full authority for all acts done by them in the execution of this Act by the direction of the President. Correspondence in the execution of this Act may be carried in penalty envelopes bearing the frank of the War Department. Any person charged as herein provided with the duty of carrying into effect any of the provisions of this Act or the regulations made or directions given thereunder who shall fail or neglect to perform such duty; and any person charged with such duty or having and exercising any authority under said Act, regulations, or directions, who shall knowingly make or be a party to the making of any false or incorrect registration, physical examination, exemption, enlistment, enrollment, or muster; and any person who shall make or be a party to the making of any false statement or certificate as to the fitness or liability of himself or any other person for service under the provisions of this Act, or regulations made by the President thereunder, or otherwise evade or aids another to evade the requirements of this Act or of said regulations, or who, in any manner, shall fail or neglect fully to perform any duty required of him in the execution of this Act, shall, if not subject to military law, be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction in the district court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, be punished by imprisonment for not more than one year, or, if subject to military law, shall be tried by court-martial and suffer such punishment as a court-martial may direct.

Sec. 7. That the qualifications and conditions for voluntary enlistment as herein provided shall be the same as those prescribed by existing law for enlistments in the Regular Army, except that recruits must be between the ages of eighteen and forty years, both inclusive, at the time of their enlistment; and such enlistments shall be for the period of the emergency unless sooner discharged. All enlistments, including those in the Regular Army Reserve, which are in force on the date of the approval of this Act and which would terminate during the emergency shall continue in force during the emergency unless sooner discharged; but nothing herein contained shall be construed to shorten the period of any existing enlistment. *Provided*, That all persons enlisted or drafted under any of the provisions of this Act shall as far as practicable be grouped into units by States and the political subdivisions of the same. *Provided further*, That all persons who have enlisted since April first, nineteen hundred and seventeen, either in the Regular Army or in the National Guard, and all persons who have enlisted in the National Guard since June third, nineteen hundred and sixteen, upon their application, shall be discharged upon the termination of the existing emergency.

The President may provide for the discharge of any or all enlisted men whose status with respect to dependents renders such discharge advisable; and he may also authorize the employment on any active duty of retired enlisted men of the Regular Army, either with their rank on the retired list or in higher enlisted grades, and such retired enlisted men shall receive the full pay and allowances of the grades in which they are actively employed.

Sec. 8. That the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, is authorized to appoint for the period of the existing emergency such general officers of appropriate grades as may be necessary for duty with brigades, divisions, and higher units in which the forces provided for herein may be organized by the President, and general officers of appropriate grade for the several Coast Artillery districts. In so far as such appointments may be made from any of the forces herein provided for, the appointees may be selected irrespective of the grades held by them in such forces. Vacancies in all grades in the Regular Army resulting from the appointment of officers thereof to higher grades in the forces other than the Regular

Authority conferred.

Use of frank.

Offenses designated.
Failure to act.

Making false registrations, etc.

Making false statements, etc.

Neglect of duty, etc.

Punishment.

Voluntary enlistments.

Qualifications, etc.
Post, p. 522.

Period.
Enlistments in force continued through emergency.
Post, p. 521.

Proces.
Geographical units.

Discharges allowed at end of emergency.

Enlisted men.
Discharges to support family.
Active duty for retired enlisted men.

General officers for emergency.
Post, p. 519.

For Coast Artillery.

Selection of appointees.

Filling resulting vacancies in the Army.
Post, p. 534.

Army herein provided for shall be filled by temporary promotions and appointments in the manner prescribed for filling temporary vacancies by section one hundred and fourteen of the national defense Act approved June third, nineteen hundred and sixteen; and officers appointed under the provisions of this Act to higher grades in the forces other than the Regular Army herein provided for shall not vacate their permanent commissions nor be prejudiced in their relative or lineal standing in the Regular Army.

Vol. 23, p. 211.
Permanent status obtained.
Appointments to be for emergency period.
Discharges for cause.
Examination boards to act on qualifications, etc.
Discharges if recommended.
Equality of pay, etc., declared.
Pay of enlisted men increased during emergency.
Provis. Not credited to service pay.
Restriction on details, etc., suspended.
Liquor prohibitions authorized. Post, p. 393.
Provis. Sales of spirits, etc., forbidden.
Medical allowances. Sales to men in uniform unlawful.
Punishment for.

Sec. 9. That the appointments authorized and made as provided by the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh paragraphs of section one and by section eight of this Act, and the temporary appointments in the Regular Army authorized by the first paragraph of section one of this Act, shall be for the period of the emergency, unless sooner terminated by discharge or otherwise. The President is hereby authorized to discharge any officer from the office held by him under such appointment for any cause which, in the judgment of the President, would promote the public service; and the general commanding any division and higher tactical organization of territorial department is authorized to appoint from time to time military boards of not less than three nor more than five officers of the forces herein provided for to examine into and report upon the capacity, qualification, conduct, and efficiency of any commissioned officer within his command other than officers of the Regular Army holding permanent or provisional commissions therein. Each member of such board shall be superior in rank to the officer whose qualifications are to be inquired into, and if the report of such board be adverse to the continuance of any such officer and be approved by the President, such officer shall be discharged from the service at the discretion of the President with one month's pay and allowances.

Sec. 10. That all officers and enlisted men of the forces herein provided for other than the Regular Army shall be in all respects on the same footing as to pay, allowances, and pensions as officers and enlisted men of corresponding grades and length of service in the Regular Army; and commencing June one, nineteen hundred and seventeen, and continuing until the termination of the emergency, all enlisted men of the Army of the United States in active service whose base pay does not exceed \$21 per month shall receive an increase of \$16 per month; those whose base pay is \$24, an increase of \$12 per month; those whose base pay is \$30, \$36, or \$40, an increase of \$8 per month; and those whose base pay is \$45 or more, an increase of \$6 per month: *Provided*, That the increases of pay herein authorized shall not enter into the computation of continuous-service pay.

Sec. 11. That all existing restrictions upon the detail, detachment, and employment of officers and enlisted men of the Regular Army are hereby suspended for the period of the present emergency.

Sec. 12. That the President of the United States, as Commander in Chief of the Army, is authorized to make such regulations governing the prohibition of alcoholic liquors in or near military camps and to the officers and enlisted men of the Army as he may from time to time deem necessary or advisable: *Provided*, That no person, corporation, partnership, or association shall sell, supply, or have in his or its possession any intoxicating or spirituous liquors at any military station, cantonment, camp, fort, post, officers' or enlisted men's club, which is being used at the time for military purposes under this Act, but the Secretary of War may make regulations permitting the sale and use of intoxicating liquors for medicinal purposes. It shall be unlawful to sell any intoxicating liquor, including beer, ale, or wine, to any officer or member of the military forces while in uniform, except as herein provided. Any person, corporation, partnership, or association violating the provisions of this section of the regulations made thereunder shall, unless otherwise punishable under the Articles of War, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and be punished

by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than twelve months, or both.

SEC. 13. That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed during the present war to do everything by him deemed necessary to suppress and prevent the keeping or setting up of houses of ill fame, brothels, or bawdy houses within such distance as he may deem needful of any military camp, station, fort, post, cantonment, training, or mobilization place, and any person, corporation, partnership, or association receiving or permitting to be received for immoral purposes any person into any place, structure, or building used for the purpose of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution within such distance of said places as may be designated, or shall permit any such person to remain for immoral purposes in any such place, structure, or building as aforesaid, or who shall violate any order, rule, or regulation issued to carry out the object and purpose of this section shall, unless otherwise punishable under the Articles of War, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or imprisonment for not more than twelve months, or both.

SEC. 14. That all laws and parts of laws in conflict with the provisions of this Act are hereby suspended during the period of this emergency.

Approved, May 18, 1917.

CHAP. 16.—An Act Authorizing the county of Morrison, Minnesota, to construct a bridge across the Mississippi River in said county.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the county of Morrison, in the State of Minnesota, be, and it is hereby, authorized to construct, maintain, and operate a highway bridge and approaches thereto across the Mississippi River, at a point suitable to the interests of navigation, in section eight, township one hundred and twenty-seven north, range twenty-nine west of the fifth principal meridian, and section thirty-two, township thirty-nine north, range thirty-two west of the fourth principal meridian, in the State of Minnesota, in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to regulate the construction of bridges over navigable waters," approved March twenty-third, nineteen hundred and six.

SEC. 2. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved.

Approved, May 22, 1917.

CHAP. 17.—An Act Authorizing the city of Bemidji, Minnesota, to construct a bridge across the Mississippi River at or near that place.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the city of Bemidji, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Minnesota, its successors and assigns, be, and they are hereby, authorized to construct, maintain, and operate a bridge and approaches thereto across the Mississippi River at a point suitable to the interests of navigation between lots one and two, section sixteen, township one hundred and forty-sixth north, range thirty-three west, fifth principal meridian, in the State of Minnesota, in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to regulate the construction of bridges over navigable waters," approved March twenty-third, nineteen hundred and six.

SEC. 2. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved.

Approved, May 22, 1917.

Prevention of bawdy houses, etc., near military places.
Fed., pp. 333, 335.

Punishment for violations.

Suspension of conflicting laws.

May 22, 1917.
[S. 1055.]

[Public, No. 13.]

Mississippi River, Morrison County, Minn., may bridge.

Location.

Construction.
Vol. 34, p. 84.

Amendment.

May 22, 1917.
[S. 1057.]

[Public, No. 14.]

Mississippi River, Bemidji, Minn., may bridge.

Construction.
Vol. 34, p. 84.

Amendment.

Appendix B:

June 5, 1917 registration for Herbert Lee Hamilton

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1. Tall, medium or short (specify which) *Medium* Slender, medium, or stout (which) *Medium*

2. Color of eyes *Blue* Color of hair *Black* Bald? *No*

3. Has present lost arm, leg, hand, foot or both eyes, or is otherwise disabled (specify)?

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Herbert Lee Hamilton
(Signature of registrar)

Printed name *Herbert Lee Hamilton*
City or County *St. Louis, Missouri*
State *Missouri*

REGISTRATION CARD

Form 1 No. *35* No. *41*

1. Name in full *Herbert Lee Hamilton* (Family name) *Hamilton* (Given name) *Herbert* (Middle name) *Lee* Initials *H. L. H.*

2. Home address *St. Louis, Mo.* (City) *St. Louis* (State) *Mo.*

3. Date of birth *July 7, 1888* (Month) *July* (Day) *7* (Year) *1888*

4. Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *1*

5. Where were you born? *St. Louis, Mo.* (City) *Mo.* (State)

6. If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7. What is your present trade, profession, or office? *None*

8. By whom employed? *None*

9. Where employed? *None*

10. Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? *None* Name (specify which) _____ Rank _____ Branch _____

11. Married or single (which)? *Single* Name (specify which) _____ Rank _____ Branch _____

12. Do you claim exemption from draft (specify exemption)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Herbert Lee Hamilton
(Signature or mark)

Herbert Lee Hamilton
(Signature or mark)

DISTRICT BOARD NO. 2,
Wichita, Kansas.

Jurisdiction	Agricultural Member	Industrial Member	Labor Member	Legal Member	Physician Member
Barber	Alfred Docking, Kanshettan, Kansas, 7/29/17 to 3/31/19	F. A. Gillepie, Gardner City, Kansas, 7/31/17 to 8/10/17	A. J. Johnson, Wichita, Kansas, 7/31/17 to 3/31/19	F. G. Britz, Ashland, Kansas, 7/29/17 to 3/31/19	Dr. J. T. Atwell, Newton, Kansas, 7/31/17 to 10/24/18
Barton		W. F. Hanson, Emporia, Kansas, 8/11/17 to 11/4/18			Dr. E. D. Kilbourne, Wichita, Kansas, 10/25/18 to 3/31/19
Bevier					
Cherokee					
Clark					
Cloud					
Comanche					
DeWitt					
Ellis					
Grant					
Harvey					
Jefferson					
Lincoln					
McPherson					
Montgomery					
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Note: -- Upon organization, F. G. Britz was elected Chairman, and A. J. Johnson, Secretary. Alfred Docking was elected Secretary pro tem, on Jan. 1, 1918.
Martha McCallister of Salina, was first appointed as the agricultural member of the Second District Board, but declined appointment.

I, Blaine Evan Hamilton, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available to use in accordance with its regulations governing material of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, digitizing or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author. I also agree to permit the Graduate School at Emporia State University to digitize and place this thesis in the ESU institutional repository.

Signature of Author

Date

Governor Arthur Capper: A View on Preparedness,
Draft Policy, and Agricultural Exemptions
During World War I

Title of Thesis

Signature of Graduate School Staff

Date Received

