

interest. It is a topic that, I am sure, has been in the minds of thousands of our fellow countrymen at one time or another during these past months, as they read what has been happening in Europe, watched weaker nations crushed beneath the might of ruthless neighbors, and no doubt sometimes wondered whether something might not threaten even our own land of the Free.

There is so much that could be dwelt upon by anyone who attempted to do justice to the American Legion's worth to America, that I shall touch only the high spots as I attempt to review briefly some of the outstanding contributions that have been made, and are being made, by the Legion to America's security and national well-being.

I believe I could come close to summing up the Legion's meaning to America by telling you, of one new member of the Legion who told me why he had come to seek membership with our organization. He never had any idea of joining, he said, until a day several years ago when he stood for hours on the sidewalks of New York City, and was thrilled, to the very depths of his being, by the thousands upon thousands of Legionnaires, who, hour after hour, marched proudly by, under the combined banners of America and the Legion, as the climax to the greatest national convention the Legion ever held.

"It was a sight I'll never forget," this man told me, "There I stood, hour upon hour," he said, "unable to tear myself away, even though I was supposed to be in New York on business, and had plenty to keep me going every minute. Good Heavens! Will they never stop coming?" he said to himself after the first few hours. "God in Heaven, don't let them stop coming," was the way he put it, hours later, when the sun began to fade behind the skyscrapers, and the first shadows of evening descended, while still the marching ranks came on and on.

As first one State and then another sent its representation down the Avenue, the thought came to him, he said, that before his very eyes, was all the answer anyone would ever need to any threats that could be made against America—that here was ample warning to all the world that America never again would be caught unprepared.

"What more salutary punishment could be conceived?" he asked himself, as he watched the endless array of marchers, "for the Communist or any member of a disloyal breed, than to be compelled to stand on the sidelines for an American Legion Parade, and see for himself what an insurmountable obstacle there is to any subversive doctrine or activity that might dare to raise its head against us?"

One of the first things he did on his return from New York was to apply for membership in the Legion. He couldn't wait to be part of that bulwark of American manhood, even though it has taken him nearly twenty years to make up his mind. And it took the realization of what the American Legion has come to mean to America, to persuade him finally to pitch in and assume his share of the burden that, as he put it, "every real American must be prepared to carry if he has sense enough to value properly his free American citizenship, and if he has love enough for his children to wish to turn the country over to them in at least as good shape as it came to him."

In seeking to arrive at any valuation of the American Legion to the United States, we need but to refer to the Preamble to the Legion's Constitution to get a clear understanding of the motives of patriotism and service to country that promoted the formation of this great patriotic organization—