

REPORT OF TRIP TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
IN PARIS, FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 1927

By Mrs. Levi M. Hall,

President, Hennepin County Central Committee, American Legion Auxiliary.

Tuesday, September 6th., we boarded the Soo Line train and began our pilgrimage to France. The train was crowded with Legionnaires, most of them from Minnesota, but many of them from Washington, Montana, Wisconsin and the Dakotas. We arrived at Saylt St Marie Wednesday morning. Legionnaires from that city met us at the station when we got off for sight-seeing. Mr. John P. Old gave an address of welcome, and Dr. A. F. Branton, Vice Commander of the Department of Minnesota, responded. Their Auxiliary presented each one of us with a little buttonhole bouquet of sweet peas. We boarded boats at the Canal and proceeded through the locks, landing on the Canadian side where the train was waiting for us. While we were on the boat the chimes of St. James church were playing There's a Long, Long Trail a-Winding. We thought of the pilgrimage ahead of us and deemed it very appropriate.

We boarded the train, again, and the news spread that there was to be a masked party on the observation car after dinner. Everybody made themselves as ridiculous as possible and went to the party. The train stopped at North Bay and waited for us while we paraded in costume through the main streets of the town. We arrived in Montreal at 9 a.m., Thursday and found buses outside the station waiting to carry us around the town. After lunch we got back on the train and started to Quebec, arriving there at 5:15 p.m.

The train halted right beside the boat and we received our first sight of our ship, the "Montnairn". We were very much excited and hurried up the gang plank. The ship was a very large one, and we wondered whether we would ever learn our way about it. We met many of our Minnesota friends who had arrived via the Burlington Route. After finding our cabin and getting located, we got off the boat to see Quebec. We were uneasy for fear the boat would pull out without us, so we returned

eatly. We stayed on deck until about two o'clock waiting for the ship to sail but finally gave it up and went to bed.

The next morning we learned the ship had set sail at 4 a.m.

We spent our time on the "Montnairn" promenading the deck for exercise. Our ship was an English one, so, besides the three regular meals a day, hot boullion was served about ten in the morning, tea, sandwiches and cake at four in the afternoon, and sandwiches and fruit about ten o'clock at night. You see exercise was necessary.

Every night there was either a dance, card party, movie or other entertainment to amuse us. Everyone got acquainted; it was like one big family. We passed from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the ocean early Sunday morning. Many people were pretty sick but we walked fast and furiously and escaped. Rev. Ezra C. Clemans preached the morning sermon and Blanche Scallen, who was very sea-sick got out of bed to sing at the service. She sang beautifully and we were very proud of her. On Monday we sighted a large iceberg. On Tuesday, the 12th., a memorial service was conducted for the sailors and aviators who had lost their lives at sea. The service was very impressive. Buglers of the Buffalo, New York, drum corps, which was aboard, played the "Church" call and Staff King offered prayer. A Buffalo man read the service and a procession was formed led by Mrs. J. M. Bishop, our state president. She was carrying a large armful of flowers, and was followed by the nurses and Glee Club, all carrying flowers, which they threw into the sea to honor the dead. "Taps" were then sounded and we were dismissed. Dr. Branton and Mrs. Bishop called several Minnesota meetings, announcements were made, and information about the convention in Paris given to all.

Our first sight of land was Thursday evening. It was a light-house called Land's End on Scilly Isles. Friday we saw the white, chalk cliffs of Dover, England. The green grass, trees, and houses were a sight good to behold. That night we passed Ostend, which is a big summer resort in Belgium. There was a full, harvest moon straight ahead of us, and it made a beautiful white path to sail through. Small fishing boats were sailing back and forth, and I'll never forget how wonderful it all looked.

In the morning we came in sight of Antwerp, after sailing up the Scheldt river through Holland, with its windmills. The streets and houses were all so old, quaint and picturesque. There were hundreds of bicycles flying in and out on the streets. We thought it a very funny sight to see a girl dolled up in a big hat, furs and gloves and pumping a bicycle up the street. Women were out scrubbing their stone steps and sidewalks, and their windows seemed to shine. When the gangplank went down, the Belgia officials, dressed up in brass buttons and plumes came on board to welcome the Legionna. After this ceremony, there was a mad scramble to see who could get off from the boat first. Funny little trains with small compartments, large enough to hold six or eight people, were waiting for us, and we all piled on.

We rode through many small towns in Belgium. We could not help but notice how artistic and gorgeous the gardens were. Most of the people wore bed-room slippers or wooden shoes. There were soldiers and gendarmes at all the stations, and we tried to talk to them, resulting in many good laughs. We arrived in Brussels at 10:30 a.m., formed in line behind the Buffalo drum corps, and marched into the station. Here we were welcomed by the public officials, after which we were put into buses for a sight-seeing tour in spite of the rain. A block from the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we got out of the busses to solemnly pay him tribute. Eddie Lindell in a very impressive manner placed a wreath on the tomb while the Legionnaires with heads bared, and their Auxiliary, stood at "attention". A fire is kept burning there continually in honor of Belgium's unknown soldiers. We saw our first royal palace in Brussels, and visited the Gothic and St. Mihiel cathedrals, as well as the famous Market Place. Brussels is called the little Paris, and is said to be the cheapest place in Europe to shop.

We saw a European funeral procession for the first time here. First in the procession were four black horses with black plumes on their heads drawing a black hearse with a glass top over it; the chief mourner walked on foot in back of this, dressed in a swallow tailed coat and a stove-pipe hat, and wept bitterly into his handkerchief. Two men were helping him along. About twenty-five men walked in back

of the chief mourner and women brought up the rear. The women always seem to be an afterthought in Europe.

Our first meal in Europe was one to be remembered. We ate it on the diner of the train. It was served to us in fourteen different plates by actual count. All the food was so different. When we asked the price, trouble began. We did not know the value of our foreign money and, between laughs, tried to understand. We finally gave up, however, and let the waiter, or garcon, help himself. He did.

We arrived in Paris at the Gare du Nord at 3:30 p.m. All we could hear was the toot-toot of the funny little French taxis. They were so numerous that the streets seemed fairly alive with them, and they flitted in and out with apparently no regard for traffic laws. We all scrambled for cabs and sat on the edge of our seats, eager and thrilled to get our first view of Paris. What a sight awaited us!

This beautiful, historic city was all dressed up for the occasion. American and French flags, the American Legion emblem and "Welcome Legionnaire" signs were everywhere, and at night the city was all ablaze with patriotic electrical displays. We could not help but feel the sincere welcome that came from the hearts of the French people. Our room in the Palace D'Orsay hotel was magnificent enough for a queen. Our hotel was on the shore of the Seine River, and at night the front of the hotel was a big electrical American flag.

On Monday morning, September 19, at 8:30 o'clock, the Auxiliary convention opened in the grand ballroom of the Continental Hotel with Mrs. Adeline Macauley, National President, presiding. The room was very beautiful and just filled with flowers. Everyone arose while a procession went down the aisle led by Blanche Scallen the chief page, and the other pages, carrying American flags and Auxiliary banners, they being followed by the national officers who took their places on the platform. The meeting was called to order and the pledge of allegiance to the flag was given. The National Chaplain, Mrs. Stark, gave the invocation. Miss Fisher, an opera singer, sang the "Marseillaise," and everyone joined in singing one verse of the "Star Spangled Banner." Mrs. Macauley introduced Mrs. Kipling, national chairman for the

Paris convention. A vote of thanks was given to her and the Paris Auxiliary members. Then Mme. De St. Croix, President of the National Council of French Women, and Mme. Le Grande, General Secretary of that organization, were introduced. In broken English they told of the great love France has for America and how grateful they were to us. Mrs. Macauley responded to the address of welcome and appreciation, and said that she felt that this convention would bring about a much deeper feeling between the French and the Americans. Lady Churchill, the International President of the Women's Auxiliary to Fidac, brought greetings from the British Legion. She said the work of the Fidac is to maintain bonds of friendship between the Allied ex-service men, to defend the rights of all ex-service men and their families and to work for peace. She quite took our breath away when she announced they had received 433 million pounds in one day of poppy sales. All of these women were dressed in very heavy mourning, as were most of the women of France.

M. Tardieu and Gen. Gouraud were ushered in at this time and were given a hearty welcome. Neither of these men could speak English but they talked to us in French and interpreters translated their remarks. After Gen. Gouraud welcomed us, he told the women how brave he thought they had been. He said they could have kept their boys home and safe, but instead had sent them overseas to fight. He assured us the French people had not forgotten this fact and they appreciated what the boys had done with all their hearts. M. Tardieu said France had a feeling of love and respect for us because our soldiers had helped them during the war, and, also, because we had done so much to relieve their suffering after the war. He closed his speech by wishing the sun to shine on us all the while we were in France.

The reports of the Permanent Organization, Credentials and Rules committees all were read and approved. The Parade Chairman reported that the reds had declared there would be no Legion parade, but the Parade Committee decided that there would be one in spite of them, and that all should take part. We were warned that we must all conduct ourselves in a quiet and dignified manner.

Mrs. Macauley then gave her annual report. I cannot say enough in her praise. She wore a simple little white dress with the red baldric of her office. She was very sweet to look upon and was so gracious and courteous to all. She conducted the convention beautifully and kept all business on schedule time. She told us how much of her time and herself she had given to the Auxiliary work, and how much she appreciated the honor that was hers. After her report, she recommended:

1. That a paid publicity director be engaged to gather and prepare material for a monthly bulletin to be sent to all departments.
2. That two additional workers be added to the staff at National Headquarters.
3. That a fund be raised this coming year to be used for furthering an educational campaign for adequate National Defense.
4. That the Departments consider seriously and so organize their membership program as to provide for the renewal of all memberships by January 1.

Mrs. Macauley said this was the fullest year of her life and that it always would live in her memory and inspire her, as an individual, to carry on and serve God and country.

The National Vice Presidents gave their reports. Mrs. Hazel L. Cheney, Vice President for the Southern Division, told how the South had suffered during the past year because of many disasters. She praised the Auxiliary for all the relief work it had done. She predicted there would be great suffering this winter, and asked all to be ready to help when the call came. The National Treasurer, Secretary and Historian gave their reports, after which came the Memorial Service, very beautiful and impressive. The session then adjourned and everyone hurried to get in line for the parade.

Monday had been proclaimed a legal holiday, Stores, offices, factories and everything but cafes were closed. Everybody was dressed in their best clothes and many Frenchmen wore tiny American flags in their lapels. Big flags were everywhere, you could almost believe you were in America, there were so many Stars and Stripes around. The whole city was excited all day long. The Minneapolis Glee Club girls were very much disappointed at first, because we were told not to wear our orange uniforms

but we turned our capes wrong side out, showing the black linings, and wore our black hats and formed in line with the Minnesota delegation, so the Glee Club capes were worn in the Paris parade as they have been at other National Conventions.

As the drums started and the parade began, and we marched through the streets, I cannot begin to tell you how thrilled I was. The French were not only kind-hearted and good to us; they wanted to protect us also. They called the soldiers of France, and placed them shoulder to shoulder on each side of the street. There they stood like a stone wall, all in uniform and with fixed bayonets to protect us if necessary, and in back of this wall of soldiers on each side of the street was literally packed, a mass of humanity. The doors and windows of all the buildings were filled with people also. All the French in Paris and of all the near suburbs were there from the oldest man to the youngest babe. On their faces were tears and smiles, and they were all waving their handkerchiefs and cheering Vive l'Amérique, or Long live America, - not once, but continuously from the time we started our march on to the finish. It was the most inspiring sight I have ever seen. They threw roses and kisses at us, and applauded, wept and laughed.

There were two reviewing stands erected at the magnificent Place de la Concorde, and when the command Eyes Right, was given, I could see Mrs. Macauley holding a huge bouquet of flowers, standing next to Commander Savage. She recognized us, and smiled and waved. We marched on and on, so enthused and touched, and thrilled, that we forgot to be tired, and could have paraded for hours. We came to the Arc de Triomphe. No military parade has passed under this historic place since the Victory parade of 1919, and we were given this honor. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier was almost in the center of the Arc, and as we passed through in single file, we threw roses on the tomb. No one who marched in this parade and saw the expressions on the faces of these French people and heard their enthusiasm could doubt for one moment that they really loved the Legion. They feel this way, for they know what war really means. There are no young men left in France, only cripples and old men. The enemy came into their territory and destroyed their cities, towns and homes, and tortured

and harmed their women and children. Our boys came to the rescue, and that is what the American Legion means to France.

Tuesday morning, I attended the joint meeting of the Legion and Auxiliary at the Trocadero which was the Legion Convention headquarters. It is one of the largest buildings in Paris and was originally built for the International Exposition of 1878. It seats 6,000 people and contains one of the largest pipeorgans in the world. The grounds are beautiful and are among the show gardens of Paris. It is opposite the Eiffel Tower, which is the tallest in the world.

Rev. Joe Barnett, who was formerly a Legionnaire, opened the session with a prayer, after which the Minnesota Sergeant-at-Arms advanced with the colors. Commande Savage then presented Marshal Foch to the Convention.

The Marshal of France was given a great ovation that lasted fully five minutes. His remarks were translated, and interrupted time and again by cheers and applause. He said: My dear Comrades, no other country will understand you better than France. In the days of anguish Pershing came, leading the American Army and said, 'Lafayette, we are here', and today, when France dresses her wounds, the American Legion says 'For peace and liberty, together and forward'. Where is the Frenchman who would not answer this call?

He told of the perfect love and understanding between himself and Pershing during the war.

Commander Savage then personally conducted General Pershing to the speaker's platform. If such a thing could be possible, General Pershing was received with more enthusiasm than Marshal Foch. He told of entertaining Marshal Foch six years ago as honor guest of our convention. He said that there was one cloud to darken the sunshine of their visit, and that was the tears in the eyes of the 1,000,000 French widows who welcomed us, and the thought of the 2,000,000 orphan children in France. He said this convention was not merely a re-union of veterans but was the joining together of two great nations, and hoped this influence might spread, and help to protect other lands from storms of hatred and violence.

Commander Savage then introduced General Gouraud, who is the Military Governor of Paris, and who lost his arm during the war. He congratulated the Legion for its wonderful parade, and said, Flags never looked so beautiful as the two did together. He said the French couldn't realize how America could raise an army of four million men so quickly and how she could send two million across. He said they appreciated the help the women had given in the hospitals, Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Mrs. Macaulay was the next speaker. She said the American Legion and Auxiliary was the silver lining, for it would make America a better place to live in, and she explained the role women had during the war. Just at this time Commander Savage spied the mayor of New York sitting with the New York delegates, so he called very loudly for Jimmy Walker to come to the platform. He said you never forget the fellow who went into the trenches with you and if you can't find that one here, remember he was the kind of man who wanted to give something to his country. He called the boys Glorious Americans and Red Blooded Frenchmen. United States Senator Tyson, of Tennessee paid a tribute to France, and said the convention was the most memorable occasion that ever occurred in history. He declared that two countries which had been so welded together by bloodshed, war and suffering, should never have war. General Hines, director of the Veteran Bureau, Charles Mills, head of 40 and 8, spoke, and General James Drain made a report of the Legion Endowment fund of \$5,000,000, which is used to care for the disabled veterans and orphans of the war. The meeting then adjourned.

Your chairman was appointed on the Poppy Committee, which met Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. In the absence of the chairman Mrs. Aiken from Indiana was appointed chairman and Mrs. Brown, Secretary. The roll was called and the poppy report for the year was read. It urged us to take word back to our units to employ uncompensated men, or men who are physically disabled, to make poppies. For every commercial poppy that the Legion buys we must realize that one cent is being taken away from some needy veteran. We must keep the boys as busy as we can, for we must remember the origin of the memorial poppy which represents the sacrificial blood spilled in the battle fields of France. It was recommended that the history of the poppy book be

revised and sold, and also that headquarters take over the sale of stickers. It also was recommended not to sell the poppy film to units which sell commercial poppies. It was recommended to continue the Poppy division at National headquarters. Minneapolis presented a resolution providing that a Unit Organization must not sell poppies unless they are made by disabled service men under supervision of the Auxiliary.

Wednesday morning there was a half hour of music as usual, and then the Auxiliary convention was opened by Presentation of colors, the salute to the flag and a community song. They sang "America", and the Long, Long Trail. The Chaplain invoked the prayer and the Secretary called the roll.

Mme. De Belle, President of Professional women, brought a greeting in French. It was recommended that the National Vice Presidents be introduced to the convention. The National Historian's report and the music report were read and accepted and at this point the Florida drum corps interrupted and asked admission. They had received the first prize and so came to pay their respects. Their ladies escorted them up the aisle and they presented flowers to Mrs. Macauley, and filed to the back of room and played "Hinky Dinkey Parley Voo," "Madelon", "Sweet Florida", and "Sweet Adeline."

Mrs. Barring started her Unit Activity report, but at this time the meeting was interrupted by Commander Savage, who was escorted immediately to the platform. He made a very fine talk and a pathetic one. He was so proud of the convention and of the whole-hearted reception we had received from the French people. He thought the Auxiliary meant so much, that it influenced the town, home and people for good. At the last he told how he had gone to his wife's room before he left. He opened the dresser drawer and looked over the pretty things she had bought just before her sudden death and put away for the trip. He told how she had looked forward and planned for it, and how sorry he was she was not among the Auxiliary members in the Audience. When he abruptly stopped and left, there was not a dry eye in the room. The United States may well be proud of Commander Savage. He was presented with the Legion of Honor by the French government.

The legislative committee submitted its report and Charles Mills, head of the

40 and 8, called Mrs. Kramer, head of the Auxiliary 8 and 40 to the platform, and presented her with a huge bouquet of flowers, to show the men's appreciation for her work. He also presented one to Mrs. Macauley and told us that the 40 and 8 wanted to get away from the playground stage and wanted to do, and was doing, worth while things, its main project now being child welfare work. Mrs. Kramer told of her work and explained that no one could belong to the 8 and 40 organization who had not been a member of the Auxiliary for at least six months and who had done some actual work for Unit Organizations. She said Mrs. De Val from Rhode Island had been elected new head.

In finishing the Unit Activities report we learned that Minnesota had received citations, first for supply shelf, second for the revolving fund and third, for its Cook Book sale, The Chairman of the Credentials Committee, was called on for her report, the Poppy report was given and we adjourned for lunch.

Sessions were resumed at 1:30. Mrs. Biester gave the membership report and it was approved. Mrs. Shepard, chairman of the Child Welfare committee, recommended that:

(1) Departments pay the expenses of their Child Welfare meetings; and (2) That the National headquarters give help to France for its Child Welfare work. The Fidac and Resolution report were given and accepted.

Mrs. Macauley at this time announced that, because this pilgrimage to France was in memory of our boys that did not come back, she felt the Gold Star mothers should be especially honored, and so she had selected two Gold Star members to represent all the Gold Star members. She said she had chosen Mme. De Lori of France, who had lost two boys in the war, to represent the Gold Star mothers of France. Mrs. Schofield from New Hampshire, was chosen to represent the Gold Star mothers of America.

This was to me one of the most touching scenes I've ever seen. This dear little French woman dressed in the deepest of mourning, told us that the money we had sent to care for the orphans of France, had saved her life, for she was so broken-hearted she did not care to live. Now she had found life and happiness, doing for other children. She said we must tell the mothers back home that France loved their boys and took care of their graves. And they did not want the mothers to feel their boys were in a foreign

land, but to feel as if they were at home, for France loved them like their own; and in the name of a million people of France she wished to thank them for their sacrifice.

Mrs. Schofield was then presented. She was a very aristocratic appearing woman. She told us from the moment she set foot in France she felt the sympathy and love of the French people. It brought back all the sad memories, and she wanted at this time to show the gratitude of the Gold Star mothers toward France, for the tokens of remembrance, they had placed on our boys graves. She said the Gold Star mothers must be part of the heroic people of France and play their parts as heroes. She said she was proud to say this was the spirit of the American Gold Star Mother.

I hustled home to get ready for the States dinner. Mrs. Clarence Winter was chairman of the decorations for the Minnesota table at the States banquet. She held committee meetings on the boat and the table spoke for itself and showed the time and work that was put on it. There was a sign with "Minnesota -- Lindy's Home State", printed on it, hanging in the middle of the table and under this was a large airplane made of flowers. It was perfect in shape and very beautiful. Place cards were maroon and gold with a gopher picture on it. A pyramid of small flour sacks was piled on one end of the table, with American and French flags stuck in the top; and a pyramid of iron ore on the other end of the table with the flags also. The Salle Wagram was flag bedraped and flower decked; all places at the table were taken and some, alas, couldn't get in. It was a full dress affair and all the ladies as well as the men helped to make the picture a beautiful and gay one. As usual, each state at roll call gave a little stunt. For Minnesota's stunt, Mrs. Bishop made a one-minute talk, after which Dorothy Winter and Blanche Scallen presented the floral airplane to Marshal Foch and they kissed him. Then they went over and stood in front of Commander Savage and put their cheeks up for him to kiss. There was a wild uproar and many said it was hard to beat Minnesota. There were 41 at the Minnesota table, one of the largest delegations there. There was music and speeches and every one was happy and the States dinner was a big success.

Thursday morning the meeting was opened with usual music, processional, salute and prayer.

World's store gave a beautiful embroidered flag to the oldest Gold Star mother present and Mrs. Wisted of Duluth, Minnesota, was the honored one. The Finance, Americanism, and Rehabilitation reports were read and accepted. Mrs. Spencer's Rehabilitation report received much applause. The departments of Louisiana and Mississippi offered resolutions of thanks to Mrs. Spencer for her promptness in answering their call after the terrible floods. The amount of clothing sent to the flood sufferers by Auxiliary Units was valued at over \$750,000, and the southern women told us it was all in beautiful condition.

Mrs. Spencer's complete report follows:

"It is recommended by the Rehabilitation Committee to the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Legion that the following recommendations be adopted:-

- "1. That a simple, concise manual be compiled by the Rehabilitation Committee for the Units and Department use, said manual to serve as a direct method of clarifying the scope and program of Rehabilitation.
- "2. That the Rehabilitation meritorious citation plan be continued as a means of disseminating original and constructive programs.
- "3. That all Departments urge the adoption of a plan whereby every Unit, so far as possible under its jurisdiction, will sponsor sales of the disposal of articles made by the disabled and unemployed.
- "4. That an annual standardized report form be adopted, said form to be distributed not later than sixty days following the National convention.
- "5. That we continue to disburse the National Rehabilitation fund in accordance with the plan adopted at the St. Paul Convention, namely that any department may secure financial assistance to supplement the work of the department, providing such applications for assistance is made by the Department Rehabilitation Chairman, and the request is countersigned by the Department

Rehabilitation President.

"6. That all Departments incorporate in their programs, the Unit Supply Shelf plan.

"7. That Departments adopt a uniform Christmas gift program.

"8. That all Departments maintain a Department Rehabilitation fund.

"9. That the Unit to Paris Post No. 1, France, be given financial assistance from the National Rehabilitation fund, not to exceed \$1,000.

"10. That a National Rehabilitation Monthly News Letter be published in the official bulletin.

"11. That a Rehabilitation "Question box" be maintained in the official National publication of the American Legion Auxiliary.

"12. That all hospital assignments to departments, giving aid to overburdened departments shall be made through the National Chairman; such procedure will make for greater efficiency.

"13. That departments urge units to make a survey of the ex-service men and their families in order to ascertain the welfare conditions.

"14. That each Department Chairman prepare an annual resume not to exceed 200 words, said resume to be filed as a permanent record of the Rehabilitation activities of each department.

"15. That wherever possible departments establish in communities where United States Veterans Bureau hospitals are located, a council or hospital association, said council to be composed of one representative from every patriotic group and prominent organization interested in the welfare of the ex-service men.

"16. That the Department Chairman shall be the National representative in her own department.

"17. That each Department include in its Rehabilitation program provision to aid ex-service men to secure employment.

"18. That Departments include in their program provisions for the personal contacting of families of all hospitalized men."

Nominations were then in order for National President, and the roll was called.

Mrs. McGlassen was put up by Colorado and she thanked them but declined. Georgia put up Mrs. Fikler who had been National Committeewoman four years and finance chairman a year. Indiana put up Mrs. Edna Barcas, who had been National Poppy chairman and who was a Gold Star mother. New Hampshire nominated Mrs. Walbridge who served with Salvation Army on four fronts, within the lines, during the war, and Mrs. Bishop, representing Minnesota, second her nomination. Mrs. Macauley asked all the candidates to come to the platform and she presented them to us.

Nominations were then in order for Vice Presidents. Those nominated were:

Central Division, Mrs. Smith of Illinois.

Western Division, Mrs. Belle Simpson of Juneau, Alaska.

Northwestern Division, Mrs. Francis S. King of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Southern Division, Mrs. W. W. Toures of Petershing, Virginia.

Eastern Division, Mrs. William C. Spearman of Wilmington, Delaware.

Mrs. Laurence V. Benett of Paris was recommended for election as Vice President of Fidac, which has a vice president in every allied country.

The resolutions Committee then reported as follows:

- 1 - Recommended that Bulletins be continued.
- 2 - Recommended that the word "widow" be substituted for "wife" in the eligibility clause, for if a wife of a dead soldier marries again, she would not be eligible.
- 3 - Recommended that Auxiliary recognize the 8 and 40 as affiliated organization.
- 4 - Recommended that the Auxiliary send congratulations to the Legion on its program of National legislation.
- 5 - Recommended that letters of greetings be sent to Mrs. Oliphant, Mrs. Bishop, Dr. Hielscher, Bess Weatherhelt and Mrs. Hayse, past Treasurer.
- 6 - Resolved to use its influence to protect young people of the country by checking up speakers who address them in schools.

The Pages at this time announced the arrival of General Pershing, and escorted him to the platform. He said marching down the aisle with all the pretty girls he

felt as if there was only one thing lacking, and that was the wedding march. He warned us to be careful of Communism. He urged us to work for peace but the right kind of peace. Men and women, he said, who are not willing to defend their country and people who do not measure up to the principles of our country seek the wrong kind of peace. He warned us that the enemy was trying to work through the women, but he said, the women of America, who went through the war are too big and brave to be influenced by the foe, and they should direct their political efforts towards better things and strength and happiness will be secured. He told us, that to secure the right kind of peace, there must be friendship, mutual understanding and confidence and to be even true to the ideals we hold. He complimented the Legion and Auxiliary on the wonderful parade. He told of what an impression it had made on all of the people of France. The women were so pleased with Pershing's talk, and they all stood at attention and applauded until he left the room. It was moved and seconded then that a copy of his speech be sent to every Unit.

Lady Churchill, President of the Auxiliary of Fidaac, gave a farewell address, as the final business of the convention before election; It was moved and seconded that the Finance Committee donate money for watches of for some other appropriate gift for boys in the hospital.

It was recommended that no one use the abbreviation of American Legion Auxiliary as A.L.A., but always to use the full title in National headquarters, departments, Units and by members. It voted appreciation to the Legion for the privilege of being here in Paris, for the hearty welcome, and an expression of affection and love to the women of France.

It approved the annual National Defense Conference held at Washington, and voted to buy a tablet for the Unknown Soldier at Arlington. Dr Hielscher and Mrs. Cutter were on the committee. The tablet will read, In memory of that silent Legion, the men and women who laid down their lives in the sacred cause of liberty and justice 1917-18. Erected by The American Legion Auxiliary in 7th. year of its existence.

The tablet will be put in a glass case.

It sent a vote of thanks to all express companies and railroads, which here contributed and are still contributing to the cause.

It recommended that we send our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to every organization represented and to the President and members of the Paris Unit for making the convention possible.

A quartette sang at this time and then there was a recess for a short caucus to prepare for the election. Mrs. Walbridge was elected president and the Vice Presidents who were nominated all were elected and this was ratified in New York city at the ratification meeting. Mrs. Walbridge went to the platform and thanked the delegates for their confidence in her and promised her loyalty and support to the Auxiliary.

Mrs. Maccauley then told us how hard she had worked for this convention. Some people had told her she would have to be in Paris alone with her gavel, that there would be no delegation. She thanked the states, districts, and units for their loyal interest and support and she tried to tell us how much she appreciated the wonderful representation and the spirit of the convention.

The meeting was then adjourned until the ratification which took place in New York, I want to repeat at this time the fact that the reports of the committees are on file and any one can read them or see them at any time.

Mrs. Bishop asked me to attend a tea for the new Legion Commander, Mr. E.E. Spafford, of New York. So I had the honor of riding in the car with the new president, Mrs. Walbridge, and Mrs. Bishop over to tea. We kissed and congratulated Commander Spafford, had tea and hurried along, for we were going to another tea the same afternoon and one that I know you will all enjoy hearing about.

Of course you know that the home of Madge Bemis, our delegate-at-large to France, was in Paris before she was married. Her parents are still living and her mother entertained about sixteen of the Minnesota women for tea at her home. They live just outside of the big gates that lead into Paris. We took a cab and arrived before Madge. The maid took us through and we removed our wraps and went into the

living room. Her mother sat here, and in her way she welcomed us all as if she had known us always. She could not speak English and Dorothy Winter was interpreter. The light on her face and the smile in her eyes spoke volumes and we could readily see why Madge is the kind of a woman she is. Their home was very, very beautiful and when Madge came she took us into all the big rooms, pointed out the beautiful carved pieces and antiques and curios. She was an ideal hostess and made us feel at home and we enjoyed every minute of our visit. It was a rare opportunity to visit a regular French home and see their customs. Tea was served in the dining room and it was what we would call a full sized meal. We were all very grateful to Madge and her mother, and felt that this was one of the high spots of the trip.

Friday we took a train at 7 a.m. for the battlefields. We saw the Marne River, Chateau Thierry, St. Mihiel valley, the hill on one side was the German's and on the other the Americans. We went by the Meuse river and the Argonne Forest, Bar-le-duc, and got off the train at Verdun. Most of their towns are built up new again. All new buildings had red roofs in place of the old ones. There are no men in the country at all. We saw so many very old women out in the field doing men's work. It looked so pitiful. The horses in the field are hitched tandem style, for the taxes are less if you hitch them up in this manner. All through this section of the country, just as the poem tells us, are fields and fields of red poppies. We stopped and picked some. There were shell holes, old dugouts, barbed wire and trenches and old barracks everywhere. We saw Montfaucon which is now almost in ruins. In the days of the war the German Crown Prince came here occasionally and the observation post he used by him was shown to us. It was of extra heavy concrete. It was a very common sight to see a monument all alone in a field showing where some unknown soldiers lay or where some soldiers were buried. We went by Dead Man's Hill, which is called this because in a battle fought there, every one was killed and the ground around has never been touched except to bury the boys. There is a large cemetery on the Hill. We saw a large monument built by the Pennsylvania people for their memorial. Also one

for the first Division.

As we were driving along, we saw a flag pole away ahead of us and a flag was flying in the breeze. As we came closer we saw it was a very large American flag, and as we came still closer we saw white crosses, row on row, and we knew this was Romagne Cemetery. There was a large cement building on a terrace at one side of the road, and this was a Cafe and Souvenir Shop. Across the road was the beautiful cemetery. As I stood there and looked at those 14,134 white crosses, each bearing a soldier's name printed in large, black letters, with silk flags, one American and one French, and a wreath of poppies on each grave, I wished that each Gold Star mother back home might have stood there in my shoes, to view it all. It was the most sacred sight I have ever seen, and as we walked between the crosses, we silently thanked God for our boys who came back, and pledged ourselves to see that all our boys who are disabled, and whose families are in need, shall be taken care of. We owe this debt and we must pay. Mrs. Maude Donahue Hall of CoKato had intended to go to this cemetery; for her first husband, William Donahue, is buried there. Her mother was taken very ill at this time and she could not go and we promised her we would visit her husband's grave. Eddie Lindell placed a wreath there and we all stood at attention around his grave and had as nice a ceremony as we could perform. We took kodak pictures of the grave and are going to send them to her.

Now we felt the pilgrimage was over and we started out to see as much of Europe as we could in the time we had. We stayed in Paris three days longer and decided to visit Versailles, the most noted and important of all suburbs, for here are the most magnificent palace and gardens of the world. The palace front is 635 yards long. It took fourteen years to build. It could accommodate 10,000 persons and there were stables which provided for an equal number of horses. Louis XIV built this palace and spent so much money on it and in other foolish ways that the people of his kingdom were starving. We saw the balcony, where the queen, with her little prince in her arms, went out and waved to the mob and quieted them, but later they came back again and we saw the secret passage through which the family escaped. The most

important thing to us in America about this palace was that the treaty of peace with Germany was signed here by President Wilson, and we saw the room and the very table on which he signed it. The room was a very large one, 245 feet in length and 35 feet wide. It is called the Mirror Room for there are 17 windows on one side overlooking the beautiful gardens and across from each window is a mirror, on the opposite side of the room, to correspond with the window and to reflect the beautiful garden. Here all the gorgeous balls and receptions were held in Louis XIV's day. It was indeed a place fit for a king.

We went to the top of the Eiffel tower, and visited the Louvre Art Gallery, the Madeleine Church, Notre Dame Cathedral, Napoleon's Beautiful Tomb and Chapel, the Invalides Home for soldiers, the Tulleries Gardens, Luxembourg Palace and gardens, the Market, Latin Quarter and Chinese Quarter and then we drove all around the wonderful boulevards and parks. We found the shops of Paris so fascinating that we fairly had to make ourselves leave the place, but Monday night we started for Geneva, Switzerland.

At Geneva the secretary of the League of Nations invited us to dinner at a very beautiful Country Club. He pointed out many notables to us. He took us around the city and it was a marvellous place. The view from our bedroom was beautiful to behold. We were right on the shore of Lake Geneva, blue and clear, with boats, both large and small gliding by; and Mount Blanc, the highest mountain peak in Europe in the distance. It was so wonderful we could hardly believe our eyes; but when we went to Montreux, the scenery was even more beautiful. I never expect to feel so heavenly again. It was all too wonderful to believe and you almost felt as if you must have entered into the next world.

From here we went to Luxembourg, the home of Dorothy Winter's mother, and found her relations. We met a French girl here who had married a soldier from Buffalo, New York, and she was back visiting her folks. She was very kind to us, acted as interpreter and took us sight-seeing and shopping and told us of the awful things they had to endure during the war. Their country was neutral and the Germans came into their homes and lived there. The families were made to sleep on the floor and eat the scraps the

Germans left and were tortured and mistreated. The more we heard and saw, the more we realized how little we felt the war in comparison with the people of Europe.

We went on from here up the river into Germany. Always before this, when we had gone through the custom and immigration offices, the words "American Legion" and our dumb looks let us by. We said we felt the words, "American Legion," was magic, but in Germany it meant nothing, and we were told to get off the train. We had been talking to a man in our compartment who had been an officer in the German Army, and so he tried to help us and succeeded, and we were all allowed to go on. We learned we had entered Germany through the occupied territory and that this has been forbidden. On the boat coming home we learned that two of our Minnesota men were put in jail for doing this and had had to pay a fine. When we learned this, we felt as if the guiding hand had been leading and taking care of us, and we felt this many other times on our trip. We stopped at Coblerz and Cologne and they are crowded with Belgium, British and French soldiers. The Germans resent this fact, and also resent the fact that they have to pay and support this army of occupation.

We went from here to Amsterdam, Holland, and liked it there so well that we stayed three days. The town itself seemed more like an American city, but the islands were wonderful. All were so quaint we took many pictures there. All inhabitants dress in peasant costumes and wooden shoes and we saw the little Dutch houses, churches and windmills. The peasants picked up several Legion sayings, like "Never heard of it," and they would say it to us and laugh, and then hold out their hands for money.

The biggest thrill of the trip came when we flew from Amsterdam to London. We rode in a German plane driven by a German Ace. The ship was a large one, holding twelve persons. The pilot drove so smoothly I couldn't tell when we left the ground. We just went up and up and the green grass and trees and canals all looked marvelous. The people were like little specks. We flew along the shore of the North Sea, over Holland, Belgium and France; and when we got to Calais we turned and flew across the channel. There were dozens of little boats all around and England ahead of us. We flew over the

white cliffs of Dover and were over England. We certainly were excited, and enjoyed it all so much. Everything looked so pretty. We saw a big fog ahead of us and we were told that that was London. We flew into it and then circled around twice and came down easy on to the ground at Croyden Field; and here we were all safe and sound in a London fog.

We stayed in London three days and the fog was dense all the time, but nevertheless we spent every minute looking and seeing as much as we could. We saw Westminster Abbey, and the Unknown Soldier's Tomb. We stopped at the Cenotaph to pay our respects. All the men as they pass this monument take off their hats. We saw Buckingham Palace, the Court of St. James, the marvellous Piccadilly Circus, the Thames river, and went in the tunnel which is under the river. We saw the Tower of London, and all the dungeons and Jewels and armour, saw London bridge, Petticoat Lane, Somerset House and many other places we all hear so much about.

On Thursday morning we boarded the train for the last time for Southampton, where our good old boat, the "Montnairn" was waiting to take us home to America, the best country in the world, and back to our homes, and to the ones we love the best.

I want to take this opportunity of telling you ladies of the Hennepin County Auxiliary, that this trip has been the biggest treat of my life and that I realize I owe it to you and appreciate it and have enjoyed it. I only hope that in a small way I have brought some idea of the trip and convention back to you and that it may inspire you, as it has me, to carry on the work until every disabled man and needy child has been taken care of, and then we will have truly kept faith with "the men who went West".