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AT THE HOME OF AUGUSTUS P.  
GARDNER, HAMILTON

SEPTEMBER, 1916

STANDING here in the presence of our host, our thoughts naturally turn to a discussion of "Preparedness." I do not propose to overlook that issue; but I shall offer suggestions of another kind of "preparedness." Not that I shrink from full and free consideration of the military needs of our country. Nor do I agree that it is now necessary to remain silent regarding the domestic or foreign relations of this Nation.

I agree that partisanship should stop at the boundary line, but I assert that patriotism should begin there. Others, however, have covered this field, and I leave it to them and to you.

I do, however, propose to discuss the "preparedness" of the State to care for its un-

fortunates. And I propose to do this without any party bias and without blame upon any particular individual, but in just criticism of a system.

In Massachusetts, we are citizens before we are partisans. The good name of the Commonwealth is of more moment to us than party success. But unfortunately, because of existing conditions, that good name, in one particular at least, is now in jeopardy.

Massachusetts, for twenty years, has been able honestly to boast of the care it has bestowed upon her sick, poor, and insane. Her institutions have been regarded as models throughout the world. We are falling from that proud estate; crowded housing conditions, corridors used for sleeping purposes, are not only not unusual, but are coming to be the accepted standard. The heads of asylums complain that maintenance and the allowance for food supply and supervision are being skimped.

On August 1 of this year, the institu-

tions throughout the State housed more than 700 patients above what they were designed to accommodate, and I am told the crowding is steadily increasing. That is one reason I have been at pains to set forth that I do not see the way clear to make a radical reduction in the annual State budget. I now repeat that declaration, in spite of contradiction, because I know the citizens of this State have no desire for economies gained at such a sacrifice. The people have no stomach for retrenchment of that sort.

A charge of overcrowding, which must mean a lack of care, is not to be carelessly made. You are entitled to facts, as well as phrases. I gave the whole number now confined in our institutions above the stated capacity as over 700. About August 1, Danvers had 1530 in an institution of 1350 capacity. Northampton, my home town, had 913, in a hospital built for 819. In Boston State Hospital, there were 1572, where the

capacity was 1406. Westboro had 1260 inmates, with capacity for 1161, and Medfield had 1615, where the capacity was 1542. These capacities are given from official recorded accommodations.

This was not the practice of the past, and there can be no question as to where the responsibility rests. The General Court has done its best, but there has been a halt elsewhere. A substantial appropriation was made for a new State Hospital for the Metropolitan District, and an additional appropriation for a new institution for the feeble-minded in the western part of the State. In its desire to hasten matters, the legislature went even further and granted money for plans for a new hospital in the Metropolitan District, to relieve part of the outside congestion, but the needed relief is still in the future.

I feel the time has come when the people must assert themselves and show that they will tolerate no delay and no parsimony in

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the care of our unfortunates. Restore the  
fame of our State in the handling of these  
problems to its former lustre.

I repeat that this is not partisan. I am  
not criticising individuals. I am denouncing  
a system. When you substitute patronage  
for patriotism, administration breaks down.  
We need more of the Office Desk and less  
of the Show Window in politics. Let men  
in office substitute the midnight oil for the  
limelight. Let Massachusetts return to the  
sound business methods which were exem-  
plified in the past by such Democrats in the  
East as Governor Gaston and Governor  
Douglas, and by such Republicans in the  
West as Governor Robinson and Governor  
Crane.

Above all, let us not, in our haste to pre-  
pare for war, forget to prepare for peace.  
The issue is with you. You can, by your  
votes, show what system you stamp with  
the approval of enlightened Massachusetts  
Public Opinion.