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PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION IN WORLD WAR II

18 November 1948

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THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

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PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION IN WORLD WAR II.

18 November 1946.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

Gentlemen, our speaker this morning probably needs very little introduction to all of you. He is General Brehon Somervell. Ordinarily I would not go into so elaborate an introduction. As it is, I am going to have to eliminate a great deal of it. But I do want to hit a few high spots because it brings out the point I am always trying to drive home, that officers who expect to do well in high places must have a varied career. They should not be too strongly specialized.

General Somervell graduated from the Military Academy, Class of 1914. In 1916 he accompanied General Pershing into Mexico on the Punitive Expedition. He recruited and organized the Fifth Reserve Engineers. For the next few years he was on engineering projects in France.

General Somervell graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1923. During World War I, he accompanied Walter D. Hines, Director of Railways, to Europe where he made a survey of navigation conditions on the Rhine and Danube Rivers for the League of Nations.

He graduated from the Army War College in 1926.

General Somervell made an economic survey of Turkey in 1934. I also know that he was connected with the office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia for quite some time.

He was appointed Works Progress Administrator for the City of New York in 1936 and was placed in charge of the construction division of the Quartermaster Corps in 1940. That was when things were really boiling. That was the first time that I came in contact with General Somervell.

Later, in November of 1941, he was made G-4 of the War Department General Staff, just prior to Pearl Harbor. He is best known for having organized and commanded the Services of Supply (organized in 1942), which later became the Army Service Forces. He commanded that organization during the entire period of World War II. He retired in 1945 to become President of the Koppers Company, Incorporated.

His subject this morning is, "Problems of Production in World War II". I take extreme pleasure in presenting General Somervell.

GENERAL BREHON SOMERVELL:

General McKinley and gentlemen: A few years ago I was asked to make the graduation address at West Point. At that time I was firmly of the opinion that when one arrived at the point where he made the graduation address at West Point, he had at least one foot in the grave-- and perhaps one and a half.

Of course I went to the Army War College and spent a good many hours sitting in this room, after I went to West Point. I, again, came to the same conclusion that anybody who was asked to address the Army War College certainly did have one foot in the grave. So, you see before you an old and broken man.

I will try to drag out of the past what I can, which I hope will be helpful to you in the future.

I have been asked to discuss the problems of production in World War II in thirty minutes. I rather imagine that one could discuss the rise and fall of the Roman Empire in thirty minutes, and I rather imagine that the problems we had during these short five war years, in magnitude and complexity, covered just about as wide a range of subjects. But I am comforted by the fact that Moses laid down all the rules for human conduct in ten sentences. I hope that I can make this almost as brief. I would like to caution you, however--that is, those of you who still remember anything in your Bibles--that Moses' supply system left something to be desired. So maybe we ought to take a little more time.

There is no purpose in any discussion of this kind unless it can show us how to handle the problems of the future. We are not here to drag up the problems of the past. We are not here to glory in our achievements, or to throw mud at other people who did not think just the way we thought about some things. I think there is enough glory to go around. I do not think there is any particular purpose to be served in dragging up any differences of opinion in other than an objective way.

The reason you are here is to get ready for the next war. You will notice that I do not add, as all the political speakers do, "which, God forbid, will never come to this great country of ours". I certainly hope that no war will come to our country, but I am sure that one will come. I do not think there is any war on the horizon at the moment. If I did think so, I would still be wearing a uniform. On the other hand, we have all the makings for a war and I think it would be idle for us to delude ourselves into thinking that we could stave it off forever. So we might as well get ready for that war in a practical way, not in a theoretical or abstract manner.

Of all the groups, including the Army and the Navy, who profited from their experiences in World War I, I think the railroads of these United States did the best job. They learned their lessons; they recognized their mistakes and they translated those mistakes into a plan of action which per-

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mitted them to jump into this war when it came along and do the magnificent job you all know that they did. So, let us at least do as well as the railroads in getting ready for the next war.

Because of a lack of time, I am going to be able only to state these problems, make a very few comments on them, and that will be all. If I sound dogmatic in my statements, it is simply because the lack of time does not permit me to approach the subject in the deliberate way which it deserves.

The first problem is the problem of strategic and logistic planning. Obviously, everything you do has to be done as a result of the plan which is adopted for national defense. Now let me repeat: Let that plan be for the next war and not for the one that we have just finished. That is the important thing. Let the plan be for the next war and not for the one that has just passed. I do not expect you to remember much that I say here this morning, but if you will just remember that one phrase, why I think I will be amply repaid for my trouble in coming here.

There is a tendency always to depend entirely on our experience and, in a problem of this kind, our experience is not enough. You have to have some vision. You not only have to have vision but you also have to have the courage to do what that vision tells you to do.

You have to have the ability to put over your plan in the face of the opposition of all those people who always tell you, "Well, we didn't do it that way before and I do not think we want to branch out on this novel and untried experiment." When war comes, for some reason, we generate the courage to do those things. But in time of peace, particularly in a Washington atmosphere where there is a fellow behind every bush with a big triple-barreled shotgun to shoot you every time you open your mouth, it is a pretty hard thing to do.

I just bespeak your courage in planning for the next war. The point in the last war which brings that up is that our mobilization was based on a set of conditions which did not turn out to be the conditions under which we fought the war. So let us look at our mobilization plans. Let us make them on the basis of a number of conditions; conditions that we know about; conditions that we can envisage as possibilities, with the new weapons and new methods of warfare which we now know about.

For the procurement program, one must know the size of the forces, the kind of war you are going to fight, and the possible theaters of operation. It was not until after we were well into the war that the size of the forces we expected to employ was finally determined. It would have been of immeasurable help had a sufficient force been decided upon and had we been able to make our plans on the basis of that, rather than on a more pragmatic system of getting up a supply program on the basis of the money that was appropriated at that time.

Logistic planning not only must go hand in hand with strategic planning but in many ways it must precede it. There are a great many fac-

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tors, such as the time factor, that have to be taken into consideration. Those of you who know anything at all about procurement must realize that, first of all, you have to have facilities; you have to tool up; you have to get your labor force; you have to train it--all of those things--before you can actually start turning out equipment for an army. So you have got to be that far ahead of the strategic planners in order to be able to meet your mission.

You have to have time for the establishment of communications for that vast network of depots and all the other things that go with it in order to be able to jump off at the same time as the fighting forces. You have to have time for filling that pipeline.

Now I can give you a lot of examples of what I am talking about, but I have looked around to try to find the simplest one I could. You will remember during the war we had the possibility of an invasion from the north into the north of Japan. That expedition would have required Arctic clothing. The Quartermaster General figured out how long it would take to manufacture the special clothing that would be needed for that expedition. It was a period of about seven or eight months. So we had to be ready with that clothing. We of the Army Service Forces had to make our decision on the expedition seven to eight months ahead of the time when the final decision would have been made for the operation.

There are two concepts as to how to go about making these plans. One of them is that the Service Forces should supply whatever is necessary, whenever it is necessary, and wherever it is necessary. In other words, all of their planning is subject to the whims of the strategic and tactical command. In that case, the Service commander must out-think and out-guess the strategic commander. He must also make preparations for a number of eventualities which cannot possibly occur because only one place is finally selected. That is a wasteful method of going about the problem and one which taxes the productive capacity of the country at a time when you need every ounce of strength and power that you have.

The other concept is that the strategic commander must gear his plans to the Service Forces' estimate of its capabilities. That is pretty much the system under which Montgomery worked. He got his Quartermaster General in and asked him what he could do. Then he made his plans from there on out.

It seems to me that neither one of those plans is the best method; that the best method is for the strategic commander to have some Service Forces training. If I had my way about it, no man would ever rise to high command in our Armed Forces without some Service Forces training. It is just like trying to do any kind of an operation when you are not sure of the capabilities of the tools with which you are working. You get by only through the very wasteful method of having too much of everything.

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I do not mean by that that the plans that are adopted should not always place a strain on the Service Forces. I think they should. In other words, we cannot lie back in the fashion of the old Quartermaster sergeant on the post who told us he did not have any of that and hence couldn't do the job. You have got to keep a strain on the Service Forces, yet it has got to be one that is possible to meet.

Problem No. 2 is the development of the need for all types of supplies and equipment, the equipment that is based on these strategic plans. In other words, that is drafting the requirements for the forces. That stems from the plans and, as a result of those requirements, you develop your procurement program and pass that on to the Army and Navy arsenals and to industry.

The third problem is the problem of research; development of new weapons and new methods of warfare. I do not know which comes first; in other words, whether the requirements come before the research, or vice versa. In either case, it doesn't make any difference. You have got to push the research for new and better weapons, new and better methods of warfare just as hard as you possibly can if you expect to wage a successful war.

There are always going to be reactionary tendencies. There are always going to be people who tell you what they have is good enough. Our procurement program during the last war was severely handicapped by people in high places who were unwilling to take the heavier and better weapons that were developed and were available until after we had had some tragic experiences on the battlefield. That is a very severe indictment of what went on, but nevertheless it is true. That certainly is something that must be avoided. We must have some people who want and are willing to try out new things.

Problem No. 4 is the production and testing of pilot models. That was a source of great delay. It was a vexatious problem and one for which we never did find a completely adequate solution. A certain amount of testing is necessary. That testing must come right after the development. It must be on a practical basis and not on a whimsical basis. Little gadgets must be disregarded. As a rule, the engineer's view of this particular gadget's capabilities should be accepted, to a very considerable extent. I could tell you some interesting stories on that.

It is pretty dangerous to disregard this testing period. On the other hand, take the bazooka for example. The only test the bazooka had was a few little firings and then I went out and looked at it. It looked pretty good to me, so I told Al Glancy to make 10,000 of them by the Fourth of July. That was not a very scientific way to do it, but it worked. The use of the bazooka fully justified my decision.

There was another case. We had been trying to make an amphibious vehicle for goodness knows how long. Well, we finally arrived on the scene with one. Mr. Stinson and I got in it at Fort Belvoir. We dashed

into the Potomac at fifty miles an hour and it did not sink. We were greatly pleased. So I ordered 5,000 of those. Well, they weren't so good. But they did serve a purpose. The amphibious jeep did serve a purpose. It proved pretty definitely that the next step would be successful.

That was followed by the duck, (DUKW) (truck 2½ ton, 6 x 6, amphibion) which I went out to see tested at the General Motors Proving Ground. That also proved itself. But the duck, because of this experience with the jeep, probably took longer in testing before we put it into actual service.

Problem No. 5 is the determination and the allocation of facilities necessary for production. There are two schools of thought on that; also, there were two schools of thought before, in the previous war. The first one is that we would give the Army this factory and the Navy that factory. Now that is all right for the small factories; it is all right for certain things, too. But when you get into such plants as those of the General Electric Company, or Westinghouse, it is pretty hard to say that the Navy will be General Electric and the Army will be Westinghouse. You really cannot do that. So what you have is not only the allocation of individual factories but also the allocation of facilities within the factories themselves.

The same difficulty arises in the allocation of facilities between the Services, in the Army and Navy. In other words, what will Ordnance get, what will the Signal Corps get, and what will the Engineers and Air Forces get, and so on. That kind of a business is a very difficult one to solve. It is one that should be solved in peacetime, in very considerable detail, if you are not going to waste a great amount of time or a great amount of money when the war is upon us.

Lastly, and quantitywise even more important, you have to have the facilities for civilian production. After all, the country can't stop. The number of civilian people that have to be fed, clothed, and transported to business, and all that kind of thing, is far greater than the number of people we have in the Armed Services. So, in any estimate that is made of facilities, the civilian requirements must be given very considerable weight.

It will probably be true that the available facilities for the manufacture of Army and Navy requirements will not be enough, just as in the last war. The answer to that, of course, is the construction of additional production facilities. Now, there, the timing is very important. If these factories have to be built, as we built them, under extreme pressure and in a very short space of time, first of all, the factories won't be as good as they should be and, secondly, the process will involve a tremendous amount of waste and a tremendous amount of confusion right at a time when you should have the least.

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I think you have to decide--assuming you follow my suggestion of trying to handle all of these things in peacetime--on the method of construction. In other words, the decision is whether we are to have factories constructed owned by the Government or whether there should be some method adopted whereby industry can be subsidized in such a way that the very people who are to be in charge of the manufacture of these items will, themselves, build the factory and be set to carry on with the manufacture of whatever it is when the war comes.

I confess I do not have the prescription for that ailment in my pocket this morning; but I do not see any insuperable objection to working up some such scheme. If one can be worked up, you certainly have all of the advantages of deliberate economical construction to fit our particular need as against hurried, expensive and makeshift construction after the emergency is on us.

When we know what we want, when we have developed and tested our pilot models, when we have the facilities to make these things, we have to figure out how we are going to go about getting them. That is problem No. 7, the question of contracts. We had a very violent altercation during the war on the advantages and disadvantages and the pros and cons of fixed-price and fixed-fee contracts.

Because of the hurried way in which things had to be done, we got into the question of passing a law requiring renegotiation on contracts after they were made in order to take back any profits over and above what was considered to be a reasonable amount. I think that where it is possible to have a fixed-price contract, it is unquestionably the best thing to have. A fixed-price contract, however, depends, in so far as the contractor is concerned, on his being able to fix the price which he himself must pay in order to carry out that contract. When you get to the point where he cannot do that, either because of the scarcity of materials, the variations in the prices, or because it is some new article which has never been manufactured and for which the contractor does not have the process, it is quite obvious you are going to have to go into the fixed-fee type of business.

Then you have the question of pricing. Pricing is a very difficult job at best. I am finding that out in my short time in business. So what we have to do is to be sure that we set these prices at a proper rate to give the contractor a fair return and yet not make them so high as to produce unconscionable profits.

I am not a bit sure--I wasn't sure during the war and I am not now--whether we did the right thing in renegotiation. In other words, should not we have had a better pricing policy; that was impossible because of the haste. But if, in the next war, we can do these things deliberately and get a proper pricing policy, I am not sure that we ought to have renegotiation. Let the normal business forces act and you may get better results than you would with the renegotiation clause. Under any circumstances, it will probably be necessary to have some kind of an escalator

clause in the contract to take care of the variations that war is certain to bring about.

You have the problem of the size of the contracts, that is, the number of suppliers; the necessity for having more than one supplier because of the possible loss of that one source. I think with all of these guided missiles and atomic bombs and things of that kind ahead of us, that the requirement for having more than one supplier is even more cogent than it was during this last war. It is going to be an absolute necessity to have more than one supplier if you expect to maintain your production.

Now we get into Small Business. I do not know whether Small Business is an economic phenomenon any more or whether it is just a political one. Big Business is supposed to be a terrible thing if you listen to some of the demagogues, and Small Business is supposed to possess all of the Christain virtues. I think if one really looks around for so-called "unfair practices" that he will find about ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredths per cent present in Small Business and not in Big Business. For one thing, I think you will find that Big Business is watched a lot more closely than Small Business. The fellow who starts a small business, in order to get going, has to pay lower wages. He has to skimp on that. He has to skimp on something else. It is venture capital. He is gambling on what he is doing. Those are the fellows that have started off and made America great.

All big business starts out as small business. I think small business has a very definite place in our economy. But I think that the place that it should enjoy is one which it can secure by its own efforts and one not allocated to it by political action. But you will always have small business with you. It has a place in our economy. If we have the type of war that this next one may be, it will take every ounce of strength and every pound of production power that we have in order to win.

Problem No. 8 is the question of raw materials. We found ourselves handicapped during a very large part of the war because of the shortage of certain critical and strategic materials. You all know what those are, pretty much. I suppose rubber was the outstanding one. You know all the grief we went through in order to get enough synthetic rubber.

As a collateral problem in raw materials you have stockpiling. You have the problem of conservation in time of peace. In other words, you have a very serious question, it seems to me, as to whether, for those supplies for which we have a dwindling resource, we should not make a definite effort to import as much of that as possible during times of peace in order to conserve our supplies for time of war.

Then we have the uneconomic activities. The only way you can handle these activities which do not have sufficient commercial value for them to stand on their own feet, is through some kind of a subsidy. In other words, let us say that we wanted to develop some other product, like rubber,

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and in the present state of the art it looked as if we could not make that rubber at a price at which we could sell it. Well, we must at least go far enough in that development to know how to make it; to develop the industry sufficiently to have a makeshift production line, and in doing that you will probably have to furnish some kind of help.

Obviously, the development of synthetics to take the place of certain materials is a very important thing. There, again, you will have to push your scientists deliberately to search out those things for which you can foresee a shortage in time of war. There will be enough shortages that you cannot foresee, so there will be no excuse for your not trying to develop these synthetics ahead of time.

Problem No. 9 is the question of expediting and inspection. No system has yet been devised, to my knowledge, which does not require some kind of expediting and inspection. The problem there is not to overdo it and to avoid duplications between the Services.

Problem No. 10 is the question of distribution. You have to fix the reserves, the working stockages, lay out a depot system, know what your supply cycle is, and get a system of stock control. They ought to start this next war with a good stock-control system. Make no mistake about it; neither the Army nor the Navy had one when this war started. We finally put one in and the Navy put one in and they both worked. They have been copied by a number of industries. But you have to have a stock-control system to know what you are doing.

That ought to be a first requisite in any planning that you do. You have got to decide on a method of supply; how you are going to handle your requisitions; what will be automatic and what not. You have also got to tell your manufacturers after making the decision, how you are going to handle your shipping, and other details.

Problem No. 11 is maintenance. We come into a clash almost immediately between the production of new articles and the production of spare parts and maintenance items. There, again, that problem has to be visualized. You have to get your system of repairs, your system of salvage, your system of rehabilitation, and all that kind of thing, underway.

Problem No. 12 is the question of labor. First of all, there is the question of labor supply. Your mobilization plans must be so drawn that you will still have enough labor left to carry on in the factories and also carry on the normal civilian life necessary for existence.

You have got to have a system of wage administration and control. It is folly to expect control of prices without control of wages. I think had we asked for a control over the labor supply and wage administration the day after Pearl Harbor when everybody was scared to death, we would have gotten it. The point was, when the time came when we had to have it, we could not get it.

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There ought to be some system which would eliminate or minimize strikes during a war. I personally think there should be none. As a corollary to that, you have to have some method of handling grievances. You cannot permit people to kick other people around without giving them some method of handling grievances. You have got to have a just, prompt, and efficacious system of handling grievances if you even make the demand that there should not be any strikes because that is all the men have, really, to fight back with when they are badly handled.

You have got to decide on the draft for the Army and Navy and the draft of civilians. I have my own idea on the latter. I think it ought to be done. I think one of the largest and most profitable discussions that the College can have will be on that very subject.

Then you have your question of public relations. A lot of Army and Navy officers think that they are working in a vacuum. They lead a kind of sheltered life--maybe that is a paradoxical statement, but a true one. You have got to get what you are doing over to the public in order to get the support you must have in order to carry on your work. Some of our public relations in the past war were very badly handled. They caused us a lot of trouble. It was necessary for us to explain things that did not exist.

Problem No. 14--notice that other one was No. 13. Number 14 is the question of Congressional relations. Somebody was asking me the difference between business and the Army. I said, "Well, let's start at the top. Let's start with the board of directors. In business, your board of directors, all of them, want you to succeed. In the Army and Navy, half of your 'board of directors' want you to fail." You can see that with a situation of that kind a great many ideas are advanced by people in Congress which have nothing to do with the man's problem. If the gentleman's name will appear on the front page of the newspaper a great deal of weight will be given by him to an issue which has absolutely no bearing on the man's problem.

So, you have the question of Congressional relations. Congress supported us handsomely during the war, from the point of view of furnishing all the money we asked for. We could not have had finer support.

There were a great many things which the Army--I will say the Army in deference to my friends in the blue suits--failed to do (I was guilty of a good many of them) which possibly would have made for better relations, but they just were not done. That is one thing you have to put in your program. You have to do it correctly because they are your board of directors. Your board of directors ought to be informed and they ought to play on your team. If you can get them on your team you can accomplish a great deal more than you can through recrimination and--well, we call it debate.

Problem No. 15 is the question of organization. We have the question of organization within the Army command, within the Navy, and between the Army and Navy. We have the problem of organization to include the military and the civilian.

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I think there are three principles that have to be kept in mind in making up your organization. Number one is the question of decision. Are we going to have decision or debate? Now, as military people, you know the answer to that.

You must have one concept of authority and responsibility. You cannot have authority without responsibility. That is a time-worn principle, but nevertheless one that is often more honored in the breach than otherwise.

The third principle is: To what extent do you have to have duplication? We have had a good deal of argument on these subjects. I think it is a very healthy sign that we see all of these brown and blue uniforms sitting around, rubbing elbows together. I wish we could have done it a lot more when I was going to these schools. I think, however, that we must try to get a little logic into our affairs if we are going to get anywhere.

Hugh Johnson used to run a column in the paper called "One Man's Opinion." I will give you one man's opinion. I, personally, do not see any reason for having a hospital on one side of the street for fellows in blue suits and a hospital on the other side of the street for the fellows in brown suits. I do not see why the Army and Navy cannot wear the same kind of undershirt. We had a fearful argument during the war as to whether we should have little sleeves on the undershirt. The Army was willing to do without the sleeves, but the Navy had to have the sleeves. It seems to me that is hardly a problem of national policy. I can understand how the ladies would get excited about a fashion of that kind, but I fail to see how a lot of soldiers and sailors can.

I think you can carry that on as far as you like. We land on an atoll out there in the Pacific. We have one construction force for the Marines, another one for the Navy and still another one for the Army. They can hardly get the construction equipment on the atoll because there is scarcely enough room for all of them.

I do not see why the fellows in the blue suits cannot talk over the same telephone as the ones in the brown suits, and vice versa. Now don't misunderstand me! I do not know why a lot of things like that can't happen. I don't know why there should be any competition between the Services. I don't know why I should have cornered all the lumber supply in the United States so that Ben Moreell had to come around with his hat in his hand and ask me for it. It is all wrong. I do not know why we should have a lot of committees deciding things when one individual can make the decision.

If there is one thing in the world that this war taught, as far as I am concerned, it is the question of unity of command. If you have unity of command out in the field, you certainly have to get that unity of command all the way back here.

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The next war should be approached with vision--, first of all, you decide what you want to do; secondly, get up a program for carrying that out; thirdly, an organization to carry out the program; and fourthly, a means for checking on whether you are doing it or not. I have no doubt that if we do that we will emerge from that war with a far more brilliant success than we did in this war.

Thank you.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

Before we open the meeting for questions, I want to tell General Somervell two things he may not know about. The first is that we have introduced a course into the school dealing with manpower, which is opening up a brand-new field that never was studied before in any of the schools I know of. It is not only with reference to the draft, but it covers the entire picture. It goes into labor relations, and several other fields. We have some civilian experts on our staff and we hope to do something with that which never was done before.

GENERAL SOMERVELL:

It is a great step forward.

I think that the question of labor relations, industrial relations, and so on, is one in which we in the Army, were very far behind. When we entered World War I the Army taught Industry a great deal about personnel administration. Then the Army stopped; Industry went on.

Not only the question of personnel administration but industrial relations, and all that kind of thing, has been developed to a very high degree. Recognition of human rights, and many kindred matters which did not exist prior to the First World War, are those with which you will have to cope. I do not say that in any derogatory sense. I am glad it has happened.

When I was a school-boy my idea of a foreman was a fellow who walked around with a pick-handle and if any of the workmen didn't carry on to suit him, he cracked him over the back with the pick-handle. You try that now and see what happens.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

The other thing, General, was the fact that General Armstrong, my predecessor, set up what is known as Industry Advisory Committees. Industrialists come in and sit around the table with us and we have discussions on problems of the last war and what might have been done better. It is very helpful.

You will be interested to know that 100 percent of them agree with you about immediately putting the freeze on labor and mobilizing labor. That comes from industry. I thought that was a very interesting observation.

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Now we will have some questions.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

General Somervell, there are some key industries for war production that are concentrated in very small areas or, in some cases, in single factories as a result of patents and monopolies, I suppose, to which the companies are entitled. How can we protect those industries in time of war?

GENERAL SOMERVELL:

Just the way we did during this war. In other words, they pooled their patents. We thought they would be available for use during the war, but their licenses or agreements terminated as soon as the war was over.

There is a very interesting commentary in connection with that. When we got all of these industries together and got them to pool their patents, Mr. Thurman Arnold walked over from the Justice Department and said he was going to put them all in jail.

That is another problem you have to solve. In other words, there must be some modification of the Anti-Trust Law which will certainly not make a criminal out of a fellow for--well, for a lot of things, but mainly for trying to help his Government.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

That is one feature. The other is the protection of the plant itself.

GENERAL SOMERVELL:

As to the protection of the plant, you know as much about that as I do. The best protection, to my way of thinking, would be in dispersion, or putting it under a mountain.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

General, we have heard several opinions concerning the coordination of procurement in the Services, that is, between the Services. In your opinion, what are the best methods of coordinating procurement between the Army and Navy with special reference, we might say, to commonly-used, commercial type items, and also to technical items? I realize you indicated an answer to that, but I wondered about it, specifically as far as procurement in the Services is concerned.

GENERAL SOMERVELL:

Without taking the Navy into it at all, it seems to me that what you must have is commodity buying. In other words, you divide these things

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into different types of commodities. You then pick out a buyer, just the way industry does. In our case, we call uniforms and food Quartermaster items. We call drugs and pharmaceuticals, Medical items. The hospital equipment we call Medical equipment, and so forth. It seems to me that that is the way to do it.

If you just shut your eyes, all of you, and try to think we haven't got an Army; we haven't got a Navy; we have a brand-new nation without an Army and without a Navy. It is a brand-new country. We have none of these many traditions behind us. How would you go about setting this thing up? I do not think we would have a lot of the things we have now. I think we would put these common items into a common pot. We would have one organization behind it.

Does that answer your question?

A STUDENT:

You mean by that joint procurement, or cross-procurement, or would you care to say?

GENERAL SOMERVELL:

As long as you have the Army and Navy as two separate Services, I would have an arrangement perfected such as the one we proposed in the Draper-Strauss Report, where we said that this organization will do all the buying for the Army and Navy. We'll say that the Navy has a paramount interest in the purchase of oil. The Navy buys all the oil. The Army buys all the undershirts. The Army Air Forces will buy all the airplanes.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Thank you, sir.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

General, you seem to have satisfied the class very quickly. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for a very enlightening discussion. Thank you very much.

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