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THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE

9 June 1947

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THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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9 June 1947

GENERAL MCKINLEY: Gentlemen, this afternoon we have with us Mr. Frank Bane. Mr. Bane was educated at Randolph-Macon College and at Columbia University. He has had a long association with public-welfare work on both local and national levels.

In the recent war Mr. Bane served as Director of the Division of State and Local Cooperation and the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. He was also a member of the Civilian Protection Board in the Office of Civilian Defense; also Director of Field Operations for O.P.A., and as a member of the Homes Utilization Division, National Housing Authority.

This afternoon Mr. Bane will speak to us on the organization and administration of the Office of Civilian Defense. I take great pleasure in introducing Mr. Bane. (Applause)

MR. BANE: General McKinley, gentlemen: I guess I could start best by telling you a story of how much of this happened.

Early in June 1940 I got a telephone call from a gentleman by the name of Knudsen saying the President wanted to have a meeting of the newly-appointed Advisory Commission on National Defense and wanted to talk about how the commission itself should be organized and operated on the Washington level; also to discuss what should be done with respect to the States and localities.

We came down to Washington and there around the table sat seven men --I beg your pardon; six men and one woman. Miss Harriet Elliott handled the consumer end of it.

It is interesting to remember how little they had at that time as contrasted with the rapid development very soon thereafter. It was determined that something had to be done to organize the country for civilian defense; something had to be done to convince the country we were confronted with a serious emergency; and something also had to be done to develop an administrative procedure for the Advisory Commission itself.

So we did what most people do in Washington when confronted with a hurry-up job. We proceeded to beg, borrow, and steal all the personnel we could borrow from the old-line agencies around town. Years before, I had been Director of the Social Security Board. So we went over to

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the Social Security Board and took all of the secretaries and administrative officers and officials that we possibly could. Then we went over to the Federal Reserve Bank building on Constitution Avenue and set up an organization to begin to operate.

Then the question came up as to what we would do out in the country. We took a leaf from what had been done to some extent--not a great deal, but what had been done to some extent--in the War of 1917-1918. We drew up a memorandum which we sent to all of the governors and asked them to put a certain type of administrative organization into effect. That plan provided, first, for the appointment of a Council of Defense in every one of the states. That Council of Defense was to be under the chairmanship of the Governor of the State. A paid executive officer in that state council was authorized and directed to develop a local Council of Defense in all of the localities and political subdivisions of each of the states.

That sounds like an extensive plan of organization. It sounds like a difficult sort of a job. As a matter of fact, it wasn't. We followed, to a very considerable extent, the same pattern that had been set up several months previously for Selective Service and the same plan that Selective Service, as a matter of fact, had used in the war back in 1917-18. So, over a period of six months, we organized a Council of Defense in every state in the Union and local Councils of Defense in almost every political subdivision. I say "almost" advisedly because some of the governors told us there were certain counties in certain places in the United States, particularly in the Rocky Mountain States, where they had no particular need for a specific organization for each county; so they had a regional one covering several counties.

Given the organization, the question was What was it to do? What really was the problem in so far as civilian defense was concerned? Here in Washington it was quite a problem to find out just what you were going to do. Actually, it was a problem of deciding where you were going now that you were all dressed up.

The Civilian Defense organization was a mechanism designed to enable the Washington agencies to answer the question which was thrown at them continually by civilians all over the country, namely, in this defense emergency, and later in the war emergency, what can I, as an individual, do to help?

So we worked out a plan of operation which provided, first, an interstate system of police; second, an interstate system of fire; third, an interstate system having to do with transportation; and four, we later got into all kinds of questions, such as scrap, nutrition, education, facilities, and so on, which I will discuss in more detail as we go along.

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But the first problem had to do with police. We made an interstate arrangement with all of the states whereby the governors of the several states, first within their own states and then interstate, developed a plan whereby you could focus the police officials of any particular locality upon any particular problem which might arise, in any place.

Specifically, a plan was worked out in New Jersey whereby, under the direction of the governor, police from Newark could be moved to Camden; police from Trenton could be moved to Hoboken; or police from New Jersey could be moved over to New York. In each instance, when moved, they worked under the direction and control, of course, of the local police chief. Perhaps you have that little blue pamphlet of the country-wide organization of police forces in your library here at the War College.

Exactly the same thing was done with respect to fire. Arrangements were made whereby we could transfer expeditiously, from one city to another, the fire departments; and could transfer from state to state the fire departments within the states.

But that got us into trouble right off the bat. The question was--politically, if you please--assuming we would have to do it, what would happen, shall I say, in the city of Newark if the Mayor of Newark and the Governor of New Jersey agreed to transfer a large part of the fire department from Newark, New Jersey, over to New York to handle an emergency situation and then, lo and behold, the bombers whirled around and came back and bombed Newark? It was really a question as to what would happen to the Mayor, politically, if he would cooperate in such a program.

But it happened in the last war that they were, more or less--well, they were rash; they agreed to take a chance. They did not think there was any immediate probability of being bombed, except in Norfolk, Virginia. Now I don't know whether any of gentlemen know Colonel Borland or not, but he used to be the City Manager of Norfolk, Virginia. I went to grammar school with the Colonel in Norfolk many years ago. He was the City Manager in Norfolk during the war and had been for ten or fifteen years.

As always happens when you begin to set up a big, new organization in Washington, every single agency in Washington that was set up-- and it seemed at times every division within any single agency--immediately developed a field staff. All of them sent their people out into the country to tell the city administrators and state administrators what to do.

Borland called me on the telephone one day and said he was doing nothing from morning to night except to listen to Federal advisors. He said, "All of them come down and recommend that I do this, that, or the other. I stall because, after all, we are limited with respect

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to our finances." Then he said a man said to him, by way of clinching his argument, "Just what would you do? Wouldn't you be just horrified if a bomb dropped on you here in Norfolk?" The Colonel said, "No, I wouldn't be horrified or disturbed at all. You see, we get about twenty-five 'bums' from North Carolina every week." (Laughter) That situation obtained to some extent, but we gradually began to look into the problem and work out some kind of a simple and sensible plan with respect to this whole matter.

Then we ran into the question of transportation. Here is an interesting story: We received a letter from the President one day saying that interstate trade barriers were definitely retarding the war effort; that a bill had been introduced in Congress, known as the Andrews Bill (introduced by Senator Andrews of Florida), for taking over the control and regulation of motor transports.

The governors immediately objected. The President called a conference of the heads of the war agencies and the Executive Committee of the Governors' Conference. We spent all day talking about this question of interstate trade barriers, particularly with respect to motor transports. Governor Stassen, of Minnesota, was at that time chairman of the Governors' Conference and, therefore, chairman of the Executive Committee. In the conference the Governor asked the President how long did he think it would take to get the Andrews Bill through Congress. The answer from the then head of Office of Defense Transportation, Mr. Eastman, was that it would take approximately sixty days. Whereupon Governor Stassen and the Executive Committee of the Governors' Conference made a proposition. They said to the President, "We will agree to get every single State in the Union to adopt uniform rules, regulations and requirements with respect to speed, length of trucks, total load etc., within a period of ten days. If we don't get every State in the Union to adopt such a uniform system within a period of ten days, then we will agree with you, Mr. President, and support your bill." They went through on that proposition. Within a period of nine days they got every State in the Union to adopt uniform rules, regulations, and requirements with respect to motor transport.

The question of facilities became acute all over the country. In those days every train that came into Washington was loaded with people wanting (1) a plant, (2), a contract, and/or (3) a cantonment. All of those requests were routed through the Defense Council and finally came over our desk. We were supposed to put them in touch with the people who could handle their propositions.

As it happened, a large part of those various and sundry delegations would get what they wanted, either a plant, or a contract, or a cantonment. It wasn't more than six months before those same delegations, from the same places, were back to see us; the same people wringing their

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hands and saying, "Look what you've done to us. We were happy out there in our little town. We had all of the facilities necessary: we had schools; we had hospitals; we had sewers; we had water departments, and we had everything else. Now you, the Federal Government, have come in here and planted this plant or this contract or this cantonment down in our midst and have just ruined everything. Now what are you going to do about it?"

Well something did have to be done about it because in place after place living facilities were completely overrun. So this machinery of Civilian Defense which we had set up had to, in some way or other handle that job. We started touring the country with a group of some fifty engineers for the purpose of determining just what should be done and how it could be done. It reminded me very much, going around the country in those days, of what happened once upon a time in my family.

My wife has a sister, Margaret. Margaret lived at Cumberland Courthouse, Virginia, which was just about half-way between Richmond and Lynchburg. When I was Welfare Commissioner in Richmond years ago, the statutes required that I visit the Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded at Lynchburg once a month. Time and again, driving from Lynchburg to Richmond, Mrs. Bane and I would stop by to see her sister, Margaret, who lived on a delightful little farm there at Cumberland Courthouse.

Whenever we left we would take along with us some country eggs, or some country butter, and maybe a dressed chicken or two. And we left, being more or less polite people, we would say to Margaret, "Why don't you come to see us some time?"

January 1929 was a cold, mean, wet, dreary month in Richmond. But we were more or less comfortable down there in a steam-heated house. Little did we dream of the problem which was confronting Margaret up in Cumberland Courthouse, Margaret and her four children, the oldest being twelve. It seems that the schoolhouse there at Cumberland Courthouse had burned down and that it would take from three or four months to rebuild it. The question which arose was, What was going to happen to the children in those three or four months? Margaret thought she knew. She remembered an invitation she had received once upon a time.

I came home from the office one afternoon, parked the car and walked in a carefree manner up to the house, threw open the door and there was Margaret and the four children. They had accepted our invitation!
(Laughter)

Immediately, we had a housing problem, which is what most communities have. We had one extra room and we had a half extra spare bed in another room. That took care of three. But, there were two more. So we went to the old-fashioned pallet.

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Then, there was a transportation problem: up and down those steps and those bannisters, day in and day out. I wondered how long they would stand that kind of treatment.

There was the problem of recreation. Mrs. Bane used to play a lot of bridge. One Christmas, some people had given her some very beautiful and extraordinarily nice cards. But Margaret knew that her sister would understand that the little children had to have something to play with.

But here was the major problem--the problem of the bathroom. Prior to the time when Margaret and her four children came to visit us, I had been one of those one in seven men in the country, according to the ads, who shaved every day. But after Margaret and the children came it was only if, as and when. (Laughter)

Seriously, that is a little picture of what happened to community after community from one end of this country to the other. Thousands upon thousands of new people were brought in the neighborhood, brought into the community, hurriedly, in a very short space of time, and had to use the very limited facilities that existed.

So, of course, as we always do in Washington under those circumstances, the easiest thing was to go up to the Hill and get an appropriation which we did. Appropriations in those days, as contrasted with now, I understand, were comparatively easy to get. We got an appropriation of some hundred million dollars to assist the various localities in the country in expanding sewerage plants, enlarging their waterworks, building streets, and so on.

Along came the question of scrap drives. That was dumped into the laps of this Civilian Defense organization. We tried it out first with an aluminum scrap drive. Just to see how to operate it. We picked two places in the country, one of them being Madison, Wisconsin, I've forgotten the name of the country in which Madison is located; then we took Henrico County in Virginia. Since I came from Virginia, I thought we would see how the homefolks would operate.

The pilot counties--I learned more industrial terms during that period of six or eight months with the Defense Council than I ever learned before, or since. One was "pilot plants."

Another thing we learned from the industrialists--and, oh, how we loved it; we never missed an opportunity to use it--was that phrase "the know-how." It made you sound, so in-the-know, so to speak, as you would talk to an audience about the know-how of this, that, or the other.

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The "pilot counties" worked fine. We collected every single saucepan, pot, kettle, or what not in those counties in a very short space of time. We had our expert advisors, of course, appraise the method of operation and develop a plan and program for the whole country. Then we put on the aluminum drive. In front of every courthouse in the United States we built a great big enclosure of some kind or other and piled all of the aluminum pans and pots and kettles and irons into those enclosures.

There it was, we had all of the aluminum in the country--almost. By that time some people began to think, well now that we have it what are going to do with it? It took a long time to decide that, you know. Month after month after month the residents of this county or the other county were compelled to gaze upon their pots and pans as they decorated the county lawn in thousands of places all over the United States, which is a way of saying we were getting underway by jerks and starts. No one had meshed the machinery together very well. It took a year to learn how to do those things.

Now let us talk for a few moments about method of operation. We are interested in what happened during the last war primarily because of the fact that if, as and when we are confronted with another emergency we will know what we did that was right and what we did that was wrong. I am going to tell you, in my opinion, what we did with civilian defense that was definitely wrong. I hasten to assure you, however, that I can name for you dozens of people in the United States who entirely, altogether and completely disagree with me. I will tell you my story and you can get someone over to tell you his and then you can take your choice.

In establishing a civilian defense program what did we want? We wanted, first of all, to secure the largest possible degree of civilian participation in the war effort.

Second, we wanted to set up a piece of machinery which would function quickly, and in as effective a manner as possible.

Third, we wanted the greatest amount of support for the war effort and the defense effort from every single, solitary governmental unit in the United States. We wanted to use all the facilities which they had. We wanted to do this job quickly.

So, with that in mind, we said the Federal Government here, the Federal agencies here in Washington, will develop policy; they will develop the over-all program; they will outline certain methods of procedure.

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But when we get through with that, we are through. Supervision and direction will be in the hands of the States; administration itself will be in the hands of the locality. It was a one-two-three program right down the line. Following this policy, we did not have any great difficulty in getting the whole thing set up in six months.

Then along about June, 1941, that over-all idea was changed. OPM had been established. Civilian Defense would operate as a branch of the whole over-all defense movement. It was set up as a separate agency and called Civilian Defense. Immediately that old general plan and program was abolished as a method of operation and it was decided to run it directly from Washington with, if you please, directives. The various chiefs of divisions and the top operators in Civilian Defense were all given military titles. There were, let us say, a Director-General, Inspector-Generals, and more different kinds of generals than you have in the Army.

Well, the State Councils of Defense, finding themselves gradually with less and less to do, began to wither on the vine. Local Defense Councils began, to some extent, to wither on the vine also, but not as rapidly as the supervisory and the directing agencies in the States, which were the State Councils.

For the next six months gradually OCD began to get into more and more and more trouble. It finally got so bad that Raymond Clapper, writing in November or December of 1941, was so unkind as to say that OCD had gotten to such a point where it was the most glaring example of poor administration that has existed in the field of Government for the last 200 years.

Then the war came along and we had to put away the fancy hats and the tin horns and all of the ballyhoo and really get down to brass tacks. So they had to reorganize OCD again. The first thing they did in the effort to reorganize it was to get it back on the same old track where it had started.

I think if we have learned one thing, in so far as civilian participation in either defense or war activities is concerned, we have learned that the way to do a job quickly, the way to do it with just as much effectiveness as you can the way to do it in order to get continuing public support behind the program, is to tie everybody that you possibly can into the activity, make him a part of it. A man by the name of Jefferson said many years ago, "That government is strongest of every man feels himself a part." My, how true that is in time of any emergency. If you can tie a person into the job he will work at it and it becomes his program. Let's take four or five examples--take Selective Service.

I don't know--I lost count years ago--how many times Selective Service was reorganized and organized as to policy on the national level.

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One week we were going to draft 4-F's; the following week we were going to draft fathers; the next week, those above thirty-four, and the following week those under thirty-four. And so on it went. There were all kinds of controversy about policy and over-all program. It didn't make a bit of difference down in the community. That machine that they had set up to do the job, just kept rolling along. It could absorb all of the changes of policy and all the mistakes that were made here, and just keep on doing the job all the time.

Time and again in Congress you heard eloquent speeches condemning this, that, or the other, with respect to policy. Did you ever hear anyone in Congress, either in the House or the Senate, make a bitter attack upon the way local boards were operated? Did you? Any time? Why?

Then along came another problem. On Sunday morning, December 14, 1941, exactly one week after Pearl Harbor, we had a long conference in the Office of Price Administration. There were a group of experts, rubber experts, present. These people said, "We always thought this country was a 'have' nation; but this is really a 'have not' nation. We don't have enough rubber in the United States today even to meet the needs of the Army for the next fifteen months. We are entirely cut off from our normal sources of rubber supply. We have to start rationing rubber tires immediately. We have to set up machinery here in the United States within a period of three weeks to do something that has never been done before in the United States, namely, ration a commodity."

At that point some timid soul protested violently that in making the announcement we should avoid, by all means, using that word "rationing". We should use, so he said, the term "commodity distribution"; that was so much more delicate. That was ruled out and it was decided maybe the situation was such that the American people could stand it if we told them the truth.

It was agreed to set up rationing machinery throughout the country. We had it all set on January first. Every single, solitary community in the United States used the same pattern that had been used in Selective Service. We used the same machinery we had set up for civilian defense, which meant that, as soon as we could develop the forms, procedures, and method of allocating tires, we had the machinery all set to go. That same machinery set up in less than three weeks--in every community in the United States is the same machinery that is still operating today. Every new item of rationing, as it came along, was fitted into the general plan, local boards, State supervisory organizations, Federal policy and Federal programs. We have a governmental machine that is in operation in every community in the United States. In time of emergency, and in time of difficulty, we have found that if we will but give the problems to the people who are in charge of that machinery, you can command an organization country-wide that can do almost any kind of a job in the shortest possible space of time.

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I think we also found out during the last war that one of the worst things to do, from the standpoint of confusion, from the standpoint of controversy, from the standpoint of conflict and ultimately, in many instances, from the standpoint of chaos, is to attempt to set up here, in one place, one enormous organization and attempt to graft that on top of the organization which you already have.

Most of the difficulty on the civilian front came as a result of duplication, of conflict between newly-established agencies and agencies that were already there. It came as a result of absence of just a few days' simple planning and programming by some people who--since I have spent a goodly part of my life in Washington I think I can say this-- by some people who had never taken the trouble to cross the Potomac River.

Now I don't know what it is--but there is something in this town that, strangely enough, takes an amateur from Iowa or North Dakota or Alabama or Virginia and within three weeks makes him into the most stupendous expert you ever saw. That state of mind sometimes causes trouble. Especially does it cause trouble if you have the kind of job where you need the greatest degree of cooperation on the part of the people who happen to have stayed back in Iowa or Alabama or North Dakota or Virginia.

I will be glad to try to answer any questions you may have. (Applause)

GENERAL MCKINLEY: Where is Gallagher?

LIEUT. COL. GODARD: Colonel Gallagher is on official leave, sir.

A STUDENT OFFICER: Colonel Gallagher would like to know, sir, whether or not those fire-engines from Jersey City would fit the fire-plugs in Hoboken. (Laughter)

MR. BANE: Now that is a perfectly fair question. It is entitled to an utterly frank answer, isn't it?

I am not an expert on that and, of course, I have not been there and looked at them and cannot tell you from personal knowledge, but judging from what I read in the newspapers and knowing something about the method of sale and promotion of fire equipment--if you have ever been connected with a city government, you will know what I am talking about--I would say the chances are about ten to one that those hose connections from Jersey City would not fit the plugs in Hoboken.

A STUDENT OFFICER: Mr. Bane, assuming you believe there should be any plan, who should plan in peacetime for this civilian defense if that might be necessary in a war of the future?

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MR. BANE: Did you assume that I did not believe--

A STUDENT OFFICER: (interposing): Assuming you believe there should be planning.

MR. BANE: I thought I had conveyed that idea.

Coming down on the train night before last, I read a report which, if you haven't read, I recommend it to your faculty as "must" reading. Perhaps it will prove to be very beneficial. It is the report on universal military training. There, it seems to me, is the kind of plan we ought to have in this country, and the quicker the better.

Three or four months ago I met with a group of officers over in the War Department and spent all day with them talking about beginning to plan now on this kind of a job. I think the planning is going to have to be initiated by a commission such as the commission that made the study of universal military training. I think the actual, practical application or development of procedures, and so on, is certainly going to have to be started, promoted, and developed, at least temporarily, in the War and Navy Departments. Who else will do it?

GENERAL MCKINLEY: If you have it done by an outside commission like that, suppose they have someone who hasn't the familiarity you happen to have with Washington and was able to go out and steal personnel to implement it, how would it be implemented if there wasn't the basic organization here?

MR. BANE: It won't be implemented unless there is a basic organization. Any commission such as I mentioned is always a short-time study group. It would in all probability do what this commission did namely, urge and recommend the immediate establishment of a continuing organization to implement it.

GENERAL MCKINLEY: You know the difficulty of finding your way around here if you aren't "in the know".

MR. BANE: You betcha.

A STUDENT OFFICER: How did the internal security program work in Civilian Defense? What coordination did you have?

MR. BANE: First of all, tell me what you mean by "internal security".

A STUDENT OFFICER: I mean programs such as the F.B.I. and all of the Army security programs.

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MR. BANE: In developing the police plan that I mentioned, we worked very closely with the F.B.I. It helped develop the report, worked on the whole plan, tied in with it from beginning to end.

A STUDENT OFFICER: What do you think should be encompassed in a plan for civilian defense? I judge that some of the programs that were carried out during the last war probably were not appropriate to that sort of thing. What would you suggest should be included?

MR. BANE: Police, fire, transportation, selective service. I do not have a broad interpretation of it. You understand I am thinking in terms of what should be done by civilians on an operating basis--the civilian as contrasted with the Military. There should also be included conservation programs of all kinds and descriptions. Perhaps, although I am by no means certain of this, air-raid wardens and things of that kind.

The group over in the War Department asked me this question--I don't know the answer--whether that should be under the direction of the Military or the civilian in case of an emergency. Well, I think I would rather lean toward the direction of the Military in case of an emergency.

Back in the early days of the defense movement General Marshall suggested to me one day that we send a joint committee--that was in the early days; we hadn't learned the word "mission", over to London at the time of the bombing there to study the relation between the Military and civilian activities. He suggested he pick three officers and that we pick three civilians. We picked a transportation expert, a health expert (Dr. Parran), and a welfare official (Miss Jane Roy). The General picked three officers. They went over and spent about three months in London at the height of the bombing there and came back and wrote a very interesting report, right on the point which you raise, What should be under civilian control and what should be under Military.

A STUDENT OFFICER: How about the dispersion of civilian home-site and underground sites? Does that come under your bailiwick?

MR. BANE: Because I do not have as much temerity as some people, I would be a little loath to go into that. However, I have worked a little around the University of Chicago and we have out there a very distinguished professor of sociology by the name of William Fielding Ogburn. He has written quite extensively on the general thesis that we should begin immediately to break up all of our cities and scatter our population in small communities all over the United States. Well, that is quite an assignment. I have all I can do right now without taking that one on.

A STUDENT OFFICER: Mr. Bane, you spoke of your having learned all of these different industrial expressions. I might say it has taken me some three months to try to learn this job. Can you tell us, sir, whether

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you think transportation in time of war, or in connection with planning for war, should be divided between Civilian Defense and any other Government agency that may be given the job of running it?

MR. BANE: When you speak of transportation, are you talking about railroads, motor transportation, and so on?

A STUDENT OFFICER: Yes, sir.

MR. BANE: Whether it should be operated by one agency?

A STUDENT OFFICER: Yes.

MR. BANE: Are you talking about within a certain city or all over the country?

A STUDENT OFFICER: All over the country.

MR. BANE: I would say, perhaps, no, in so far as actual operation is concerned. But I hasten to say, with regard to regulation and close control, without a doubt, yes. In other words, if we learned anything in this last war on that front I think we learned we had to have an agency such as the Office of Defense Transportation, which is what you were talking about, with probably much more extensive controls than they had this time.

But speaking purely of motor transportation, large companies, small companies, individual units, if you took them all over and actually operated them from one central place, I am inclined to think you would probably cause more confusion than you would get benefit; at least certainly that was our experience during the last war.

A STUDENT OFFICER: I would like to refer to the aluminum scrap drive you talked about. You said, as I recall, they had not been able to mesh the gears--

MR. BANE: (interposing) At that time.

A STUDENT OFFICER: Was that caused by failing to have a part of the office designated to plan these things through, or was it a failure to have a procedure for thinking things through?

MR. BANE: Well, it was certainly a failure to have the procedure for follow-through. It was the first scrap drive we had ever had. You see, the Advisory Council on Defense was split up into seven--listen to this--it was split up into seven individual segments: There was

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Knudsen in production; Stettinius in materials; Henderson in price; Byrd in transportation; Hillman in labor; Elliott in consumer; etc. To a very large extent they operated as individuals.

(Discussion off the record.)

GENERAL MCKINLEY: Mr. Bane, I'm afraid we're running over our time a little. We do want to thank you for coming down and giving us the benefit of this wonderful talk. Thank you very much, sir.
(Applause)

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