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ADDRESS OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR

at Opening of

THE ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

Feb. 21, 1924

In modern warfare, munitions are essential to the success of the army. An army consists in effect of two parts - man-power and munitions and one is useless without the other. In a major effort, the amounts of certain items of supply which are used by an army have always been and will always be limited by the country's ability to furnish them. And inasmuch as the world is constantly progressing industrially as well as through scientific and engineering developments, the supply problem of the future will inevitably become more essential, complex, and vast.

Realizing that the real task of the army in time of peace is to prepare itself to perform properly its mission in time of war, the question arises - "Have we developed and are we operating a training system that provides personnel with sufficient ability to furnish these supplies to our war armies?"

Past experience is often our best guide for future action. We have just emerged from a great war. We did not enter it until it had been going on for nearly three years. During all that time, we had an opportunity to learn the character of present day warfare and the dependence of an army upon supplies and munitions of all kinds. Even after we entered it, we did not immediately enter the firing line. We did not have any appreciable number of troops in battle until more than a year

after the declaration of war. During all this later period, we had the advice and assistance of our allies to help solve our supply problem and, during the whole four-year period, the Allies had built up large munitions industries in this country. Yet in spite of the preliminary period, the year's delay in starting hostilities, the assistance of our allies, and their munitions industrial development, we were unable to provide our army with certain vital items of fighting materials, such as artillery, airplanes, and other equipment. When the armistice came about, we were still unable to provide these essential articles. And we would hardly have been able to do so before the Spring of 1919. In other words, the man-power part of the American army during the World War was in many important items nearly a year ahead of munitions, and to that extent, munitions proved the weak link in national preparedness.

But that was not all. Looking back over our World War activities, we find that many costly mistakes were make - mistakes that not only delayed production but also cost the government millions and even hundreds of millions of dollars.

In other words, at least some parts of the supply organization of our army were not properly prepared to carry out their missions and this in effect means that they were not properly trained.

The situation was apparently appreciated by higher authority and in the efforts to correct the troubles, captains of industry were

hurriedly called into the government services to control activities and, in some instances, new chiefs of branches were appointed. But in spite of this, mistakes and delays contined. And the reason for this is simple. Even the greatest captains of industry in the world must depend in great measure, and for an appreciable length of time, upon the organizations which they find in existence. An inefficient organization of any magnitude cannot be changed over night into an efficient one, any more than a new organization of similar size can be created and made efficient over night.

The theory so often advanced, therefore, that we can quickly settle our war supply problems by calling in from the industrial world men of high standing, in my judgment, is not sound. They should be brought in, for they can unquestionably be of great help, especially upon particular phases of the problem with which they are acquainted, but, if we would achieve satisfactory supply preparedness, we must have a going organization that is efficient and that is prepared for the necessary expansion. The officers of that organization should know more about its work than any body else and should be prepared and be required to man the key positions, at least until they can make their knowledge available to successors.

A well trained organization is not the only requisite to the solution of the army's procurement problem, nor the lack of training solely responsible for failure in supply during the World

War. A sound training system is, however, one of the necessary steps in the accomplishment of efficient and sufficient supply. And I believe that, if a reasonable number of officers had properly understood the supply problem prior to the World War, many of our troubles would have been avoided.

Accepting, therefore, these two principles, namely, that the pre-war system for procurement was not satisfactory and that, during the early days and months of a war, we must largely depend upon regular officer personnel to man the key positions, the question arises - "What should be our training system to prepare us in case we are ever again forced into war?"

As a result of Spanish war experience, the Army realized that, from the man-power standpoint, it did not have a proper training system for developing officers for the higher command and staff problems involved in war. It, therefore, started the Leavenworth Schools and the War College. The World War emphasized the value of these schools and as a result their importance, scope, and attendance have been increased. But they cover only the man-power problem, and the issue of supplies thereto, and do not cover the problem of procurement of supplies. Nor is it believed that they should be given such a mission. The character of the training, the experience and qualifications of the officers, the whole habit and trend of thought are, and properly should be, entirely different. Each should be generally familiar with the broad problem of the other, but their missions are distincly dissimilar and should be kept so.

It has seemed to me that we of the Supply Branches of the Army could not do better than follow the example of the man-power of the Army. We should also realize our problem, and the necessity for a training system to help solve it and set about accomplishing this objective.

From inquiry and observation, I have come to the following conclusions:

(a) That because of the diversity of their activities, which in many cases ~~is~~ are of a highly technical nature, each supply branch must be held responsible in great measure for the training of its own officers for the solution of its problems.

(b) That procurement is best accomplished when there is applied to its solution certain sound and basic principles which the industrial activities of the world have developed. There is no controlling reason that I know of why these same principles should not apply in practically the same way to the seven supply branches. There are, on the other hand, controlling reasons why they should, among which are sound and uniform procedure and simplicity of supervision. Our present system does not sufficiently provide for efficient coordination of effort.

(c) That one of the great causes of troubles in procurement during the World War was the lack of competent supervision.

(d) That such competent supervision cannot be achieved in time of war unless there is a sound system in operation in time of peace that can be logically expanded in time of war.

(e) That another of the great causes for the supply troubles of the World War was the almost total lack of adequate and comprehensive plans.

(f) That there must be made available a reservoir of trained officers which will supply officers to man the key positions, both in the supply branches and in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, during the early part of the war. These officers should understand not only the peace-time methods of operation of the various supply branches and their war plans, but should understand in detail the peace-time methods of operation of the Assistant Secretary's Office, and especially the war problems of that office and the plans for solving them. Sufficient provision does not exist at the present time to develop such a trained reservoir of officers.

An analysis and study of these plans have convinced me that certain steps should be taken by the War Department in the matter of procurement training, in order that this work may be carried out economically, expeditiously, and efficiently, both in peace and in war.

-1- The first of these steps is to establish an Army Business School at which every supply officer could get a ground work of training in the fundamental principles of business which would be in addition to the technical training he would get in his own supply branch.

To carry out this idea, I recommended to the Secretary of War that we should send officers of the various supply branches to some good business school where they could all learn from the same source the latest procedure in business administration. The course at the school which was chosen covers two years and undoubtedly includes considerable work that is not essential to our Army needs. To send all

supply officers to such a business school seems, therefore, prohibitive. Accordingly, we have arranged to send a few officers from the various supply branches who will recommend a shortened course to meet the needs of the Army and will also supply the instructors to conduct such a school to be established within the War Department. Obviously, a much larger proportion of officers could be trained each year under this method at a greatly reduced expense.

-2- In order to keep up-to-date in business procedure and to maintain a reserve of instructors for this Army Business School I believe that additional officers should be constantly under instruction in the mother school. It might also be well to have the officers who would fill the more important posts in the various supply branches take this longer and more advanced course which might be likened to the high school of civil life.

This school, together with the parent school, would deal more particularly with the problems of current procurement and administration. They will give the supply officers ~~branches~~ a ~~the~~ fundation in the principles of business administration and through the advanced course would develop trained executives for the higher positions. There still remains the problem of training officers to fill the key positions in wartime, as both the training and qualifications of the officers would be different from the officers' training as executives, although the two should be kept closely correlated, in order that the war plans may be an expansion of peace-time methods.

-3- To train personnel for the planning and carrying out of industrial mobilization, I believe that selected officers should be

trained in the broader problems of procurement problems, particularly in what might be called industrial strategy.

In order to give this training there should be established an Industrial College which will train officers to fill the key positions in time of war in the various supply branches and the office of the Assistant Secretary of War. This college, to carry on the analogy, might be likened to a college or university in civil life.

These are merely general ideas on the subject of procurement training which experience might modify. Under them the Junior supply officers would have a general training in the fundamentals of business practice and principles which should raise the level of efficiency throughout the supply branches; the officer in line for selection as the head of a bureau, the commanding officer of a depot, or an arsenal, or some similar position would have a broader and more advanced training fitting him for his duties as an executive and administrator; the officer of perhaps different qualifications who would be called upon to meet the the problems of industrial strategy would receive a thorough training in war planning work of industrial mobilization; each officer would receive the type of training which would qualify him for theposition for which he is best fitted. In the course of time, I believe that the Chiefs of Branches should be chosen only from men who have undergone a course of training in these various schools.

Davis