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DISCUSSION FOLLOWING CAPTAIN HILES' LECTURE

"PERSONNEL FOR PROCUREMENT"

Belongs
in v. 12

Q - May I be permitted to say that you have given us a very interesting lecture; personnel is always a very interesting subject. There is one thing I would like to ask in connection with job specifications. As I interpret what you said, your limitations on officers bring the job specifications down to very narrow limits. How do you anticipate failures in replacement and by what method?

A - Are you speaking of The Assistant Secretary's office or of the branches?

Q - I was speaking of those six or seven hundred reserve officers for whom you had prepared job specifications.

A - When I first spoke about job specifications I referred to those for the officers we need for The Assistant Secretary's office. Then in 1932 a directive was issued calling on the branches to prepare specifications for the specialist reserve officers they needed.

Q - Where are you going to get your reserve or your flexibility in your personnel organization in case some of them fall down?

A - You mean what will we do when we get men we find we do not want? Well, we'll just have to get others.

Q - Have you got a pool?

A - No; it is up to the branch chief or his subordinate agencies to locate the men he wants. The mechanism for getting them in after M day is through the Corps Area Commander. Regulations require Corps Area commanders to procure all officers. They will arrange through a Corps Area board to put through the necessary papers. There is no pool of

reserve officers.

Q - What is the object of making appointments as specialists?

A - There were two predominant reasons, I guess. One was to compell the crystalization of thought on the jobs to be filled. Under the old regulations you could go out and grab a fellow because he looked good without any idea of where he was going. You simply wanted him. That is the way the branches did in the allocation of plants. The other reason was that some of the specialist reserve officers did not pan out very well. I heard about one fellow who got himself commissioned because he wanted to play golf at the Army & Navy Country Club. That is probably an exaggerated case. But there were enough of doubtful value to put the ban on. With specifications prepared it should help to eliminate some of those. Furthermore, with good specifications it will help to reduce the political appointments.

Q - In making up your slate of specialists reserves do you consider their wishes or just draft them?

A - They could not be called in except voluntarily. Our object in preparing specifications is to decide on the type we want, then ask that man to take a commission, then commission him if he wants it.

Q - In your pre-war planning - do these people know what your intentions are in connection with their services?

A - Those who have been commissioned for a definite assignment know what their job will be in war.

Q - I got the impression that you had many specialists on your list who were not really commissioned yet.

A - We have a list of names for the Commodities Division and the Construction Division. It is just a list of men who are prominent

in certain industries who should know suitable officer candidates in the industry. They are not on our rolls at all.

Q - In obtaining men for the Commodities Division or the different sections of the War Industries Administration is it contemplated to commission those men or will they be brought in as civilians?

A - The thought for The Assistant Secretary's office is that those Commodities men would be officers. So far as the Munitions Board is concerned you will learn later there is expected to grow out of it a War Industries Administration. There will doubtless be prominent civilians on that. The Industrial Mobilization Plan is in process of revision right now and that will clarify these points. There will probably be a majority of civilians.

Q - Is any study being made of the available men to be brought in for the commodity committees of the War Department?

A - Yes.

Q - Is contact being made for the various specialists?

A - We have some specialists assigned right now. For instance, Doctor Furness, who will speak to you tomorrow, is a major in the specialists reserve and assigned to us for the Commodity Division right now. The chances are he would go to the War Industries Administration because he is No. 1 man on manganese.

Q - Those hundred thousand men in specialists trades - do you expect to get those through the Selective Service?

A - In the first place that figure is a guess but it is probably correct within 20%. So far as I know, no plans have been made

for the actual means of obtaining those men. Some of them are civilian employees employees. We would hire them through Civil Service but I doubt very much if the rest would be obtained from Civil Service. The original draft would get those between 21 and 30.

Q - I wondered if you had them located in districts.

A - Are there any procurement personnel provided in your plans for duty with the Corps Area Commanders?

A - No. The procurement personnel in which The Asst. Sec. is interested is that for the branch chiefs as distinguished from the Corps Area commanders.

Major Kelton: I think a little bit of history might be of interest. When this restriction was put on the specialists reserve the restriction in promotion in other branches of the reserve corps had been in effect for some time. If a man wanted to get in the reserve corps with increased rank the tendency was to try the specialist reserve. One summer I happened to be in The Asst. Sec.'s office and we were flooded with requests for assignments as majors and lieutenant colonels in the specialists corps and it gradually worked out that a restriction had to be put on that corps also. There was another bit of history which has been more or less forgotten since 1927 and 1928. Colonel Ferguson started an idea called the Munitions Battalion which had as its object the development in the universities of the country a corps of people who were interested in munitions production - something similar to the R.O.F.C. along other lines. I happened to have the job of drawing up a list of colleges and assigning some 80 or 85 men to this battalion. The idea was to get appropriations from Congress and canvass the universities for the most

outstanding men. We never got anywhere with it but its object was to get the young men interested in the munitions problems and developing them into a group for munitions work. I thought the committee might be interested in that.

Q - What are your mechanics in obtaining men for the specialists reserve to fit your job specifications? When a man attains prominence he is probably right at the peak of his physical or actual career. How do you pick men who are potential specialists?

A - I can answer that by reading the Ordnance job specifications. I got this from the planning people in the Ordnance Office. This is the specification for a district chief: (Brigadier General or Civilian)

Requirements: A senior executive to direct and coordinate all the procurement and other activities of the District.

Specifications: An outstanding executive or a large utility, railroad, bank, or manufacturing concern. He should be a recognized leader in his community with a wide acquaintance among the business men of the District, and of such standing as to command their respect and cooperation. A knowledge of manufacturing from the standpoint of control is desirable."

The way of locating him is through the acquaintance of the Chief of Ordnance with certain prominent men in that district or through the district executives. The Ordnance district chiefs are in office right now and the head man is responsible for getting others in the district. The idea is to allow him the utmost latitude. The districts have been the chief sources of getting officers into the specialist reserve. Every week or two we get somebody in here who wants to be a lieutenant colonel.

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Q - I know of one branch of the service that is going to have a staff of commissioned officers taken from civil life. I wonder if we are not going to have the same animosity we had in the last war. Would it not be better to have civilians?

A - I think your committee will make a report on that. They have reference to the records of the War Dept. during the war and I think they will straighten out that point.

Colonel Harris: This being a personnel discussion it is of much interest to us. It is the foundation of the whole situation. With reference to the prohibition on appointments in the specialists reserve, that has its advantages and its disadvantages. It has prevented political appointments; on the other hand, it has kept out many people we would like to have. You remember Doctor Isaacs of the Harvard Business School who lectured here some time ago. We would like to have him - we need expert legal talent; also Doctor Rawles, who has been Executive Secretary of the President's Minerals Policy Committee. He is an outstanding man, a Ph.D. We need him in the Commodity Division but we can't commission him. With reference to Corps Area procurement personnel, I want to refer to the talk given in this room yesterday. Yesterday we had the problem of the CCC and in that discussion it came out that to meet that problem an improvised General Staff was formed and an improvised procurement system was initiated that did not follow the normal method laid down by law. The improvised General Staff delegated problems to the Corps Area commanders without reference to The Assistant Secretary of War, justifying it as an emergency. We don't want the Corps Area commanders to assume a large responsibility for procurement in war. We want to meet the emergency with

our planned procurement organization - not an improvised organization.

The next question - planning for personnel. Someone asked if the Reserve Officers had been notified of their assignments. There is a lot of danger in that. Suppose you tell a Reserve officer that he will direct some section in the office of The A.S.W. But what about 10 years later. He has been told, but now he may be too old.

Another thing is; I don't believe in planning too much in detail and laying down exactly whom you are going to get. Some of the best executives we don't know about; the ablest may not be able to spare the time in peace. They don't want a commission in peace but in time of war they will be available.

Somebody asked whether it would not be better to have district chiefs of Ordnance regular Army officers with civilian subordinates. Just ten days ago Colonel Price and I were invited to a conference with Mr. Baruch. He retains his deep interest in this subject; I think it is the one thing outside of his regular business to which he devotes his best thought. He asked me specifically if we were planning to put the military in control of industry and he said if we were he would oppose it. I told him we were not. We are planning that the W.I.A. will be under civilian control but there should be a sprinkling of seasoned Army and Navy personnel to advise them, especially in the early stages.

With reference to the Ordnance district offices, it is better, to my mind, not to put too many regular Army officers in control of things that are industrial. If you will examine the Quartermaster General's procurement set-up on one end of the line, and the Ordnance

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Department on the other, you will find that the Quartermaster puts the least strain on industry and the Ordnance puts the most. The Quartermaster has regular Army personnel because the industrial problem is not difficult, and the Ordnance Department has all civilians. The C.W.S. has civilians; also the Air Corps. The Signal, Quartermaster, Medical and Engineers are planning for regular Army chiefs. I mention this as food for thought.

Colonel Jordan: I want to leave with the class the thought that there are three things of importance that stand out in our war planning and in what is going to happen when the next mobilization occurs. The first is that we have got to have specifications to know what we are going to buy; the next is that the system of allocation must be put into affect at once - no competitive bidding; and the third is that we have got to have the proper personnel to handle the jobs. With the solution of these three problems I think there is no question but that procurement of supplies, procurement of materiel, will be handled without any trouble.