

A D D R E S S

of

Major General M. W. Ireland - The Surgeon General

At The Commencement Exercises of the Army Industrial College

February 2, 1925.

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Mr. Secretary, Gentlemen of the Graduating Class and of the class just entering the Industrial College -- I deem it a privilege to address you. I speak in somewhat of a dual capacity. As a Director of this College I have a keen interest in its welfare and a desire that it shall adequately serve the purpose for which it is established. As the Chief of one of the Branches having a very considerable supply function I am keenly alive to the possible effect that its graduates may have upon the work of the Supply Services.

Progress in the status of preparedness of this Nation for the National Defense is dependent upon our ability to see that the lessons learned in the hard school of war shall not pass unheeded.

Fortunately our conception of preparedness changes.

Early in 1898, with war in prospect, one Medical Supply Officer, when asked as to the readiness of the Medical Department in supply matters, responded that we were quite prepared, since contracts had already been signed for twelve sets of Medical and Surgical chests. It is interesting to know that the records reveal that this was correct and that those chests were delivered after the Armistice.

Fortunately also the general attitude toward preparedness changes. In the same early months of 1898 an enthusiastic young medical officer, foreseeing war, made a hurried "survey" of the Boston District with a view to locating the sources of medical supplies within that District. He made a written report upon his observations and was rewarded by a letter from the War Department stating, that while there would be no war with Spain, the making of such studies was a commendable way for a young officer to spend his leisure.

The Medical Department has rather flattered itself that it has always been ready to translate into action the lessons gained from experience. But following the war with Spain we had to proceed quietly and rather surreptitiously to accumulate a small number of assembled units to meet the problems that confront the Medical Department immediately upon mobilization, and in 1908 we established, against considerable opposition, the Medical Reserve Corps in recognition of our dependence upon the civilian.

How different is the present attitude. Not only is there no amusement produced by the efforts to foresee and prepare, but there is constant pressure to accomplish more, constant calls for more results and more information, until it sometimes seems that the next request will be the proverbial "straw". And the best part of it is that, not only is this the attitude within the War Department, but the great industrial leaders are just as much interested and just as enthusiastic.

I have had from one great firm the statement that the services of the experts of that company are at the service of the Government without charge. Other firms are making factory plans and many others are devoting much time and attention to the problems which confront us and which the present generation of business men know would confront them should a major emergency arise. What an opportunity this attitude upon the part of Industry pre-

sents to us!

There is no need to speak in detail of the outstanding lesson of the World War. It is the cause for the being of this College. The lesson is that wars are fought by nations and not armies, that every resource of the countries must be used, the financial and industrial resources particularly.

Colonel Darnall, the war-time Chief of the Supply Division of my own Department, in his "Donts" which you will have occasion to read, says in reporting the defects within the Medical Department -

1. Failure to appreciate before the beginning of the war, the magnitude of the problem of supply.
2. Failure to formulate a plan for procurement.
3. Lack of officer personnel trained in the supply service.

Speaking of difficulties caused the Supply Service, by men unfamiliar with the Military needs, Colonel Darnall says -

"This interference was, in my opinion, primarily and chiefly due to the fact that the supply branches of the War Department were weak, poorly organized and without definite policies.

Had a strong capable organization been in existence it would have been able to dominate the situation and to so direct the activities of the Council as to produce results without interfering with the legally constituted procuring agencies."

As I conceive it, the primary purposes of this school are, first, to supply the trained personnel to the lack of which Colonel Darnall refers; second, to develop through the thought and labor of this trained personnel the strong capable organization of whose necessity he speaks. While Colonel Darnall speaks only of the Medical Department, I assume that something of the same situation existed in the other supply branches.

The magnitude of the work and the infinite detail required has been impressed upon me. It cannot be left until the emergency has arisen. To accomplish it requires personnel, and trained personnel. Within each Bureau there doubtless can be given a fairly adequate training so far as the functions of that Bureau are concerned. In such an organization as the War Department, however, no bureau can be given complete independence. The measures taken by one Bureau may have quite an effect upon another, or may be nullified by those taken by another. The War Department is a team, and it is team work that secures results. In this school you will obtain familiarity with the problems and duties of the other supply branches, you will learn the possible interference with other services which your actions may produce, you

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will learn to foresee the probable actions of other services that might result in interference with your projects.

It is perhaps a natural human failing to be unwilling to surrender the prerogatives of one's position and to attempt to maintain and develop the authority vested in one. I yield to no one in my desire that that measure of authority, necessary to the performance of my responsibilities, be given me. I conceive that a proper respect for and administration of my office demands that I shall seek to retain such measure of authority. Nevertheless, I am fully convinced that there must be some supervising agency, some coordinating body. This control is just as essential and perhaps no more so, for the prevention of interference with the fulfillment of my mission, by uncoordinated efforts of other services, as it is to prevent my Department from similar interference with the others.

Uncoordinated preparedness may have its disadvantages. In preparation for the second Cuban occupation, the Medical Department being enthusiastic, shipped very promptly to Norfolk a considerable quantity of medical supplies. We were rather proud of ourselves for being the first in the field. Unfortunately there had been no coordination. No transports were ready for loading and no provision made for taking care of these supplies. There was a long empty warehouse. The Quartermaster trundled these supplies clear back to the end protecting them from the weather. Later, supplies from the other, as we thought then, less efficient services, began to arrive and they too were stored in this warehouse in front of the Medical supplies. Large quantities of hay came and were piled in front. I have reason to believe that the hay was delivered in Cuba, but it is a matter of record that those particular medical supplies saw no service in Cuba.

It is not humanly possible for any officer, or group of officers, to formulate offhand a satisfactory organization. You have here in the records of the World War, particularly those of the War Industries Board, a wealth of material that should be studied with an open mind and with no preconceived ideas.

Your course of instruction here will not only serve to fit you for supply duty in your own Bureaus but will prepare you for service in the office which will have supervision and control over the destinies of the several branches. You will be fitted for the General Staff of Procurement. With increased authority and power there is imposed an increased obligation to exercise that power charitably. Concomitantly with your opportunity to assist, grows your chance for hindrance. Change is not always progress. The methods developed through years of trial and experience are usually based upon sound reasons and should not be changed without a clear appreciation of those reasons. For satisfactory service in such a position as you may occupy, for service that will further and not impede the accomplishment of the missions of the bureaus, a broad knowledge of supply, a clear conception of the responsibilities of the several supply branches, a sympathy with their difficulties, a judicial type of mind, and perhaps, a saving sense of humor, are requisites.

I am particularly gratified that one of the Navy's representatives for the next course is a medical officer. The two Medical Services have much in common and can work together with profit both to each other and to the services whom they serve. And much advantage will accrue from the unanimity of operation that will probably result from a common course of instruction.

I congratulate the Graduating Class on having successfully completed the course at this College.

I congratulate the members of the incoming class on the great opportunities presented to them by being selected to take this course.

ADDRESS OF HONORABLE JOHN W. WEEKS,

SECRETARY OF WAR

AT THE GRADUATING EXERCISES OF THE

ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

FEBRUARY 2, 1925.

Gentlemen of the Graduating Class and of the entering Class:

It is a great pleasure for me to avail myself of this somewhat unusual opportunity to address two successive classes at the same time. The occasion is also worthy of remark in another connection. The Army Industrial College has reached a milestone in its career - it has passed its first anniversary. It was one year ago yesterday that the first class entered into the work of the course, although the formal opening had to be postponed until February twenty-first.

It is natural on the occasion of an anniversary to look back, to review what has been accomplished and to endeavor to draw lessons from the past which shall be of value as a guide to the future. The College was established to meet what seemed an evident need. We have had for many years the War College which has prepared military men to exercise general staff and higher command functions. Our experiences during the World War speak more eloquently than can words of the manner in which the War College has carried out its mission.

Unfortunately, we never before have had an institution primarily devoted to the study of the industrial aspects of National Defense. The reasons for this are not hard to discover. Prior to the World War no nation had a conception of the primary importance which industry now plays in warfare. No Mahan had arisen to point out "The Influence of Industry upon History". Looking backward, the preparation which had been made to furnish the combatant European troops with munitions and supplies seem pitifully inadequate. The situation in America, as you all know, was even worse.

This failure was not due to lack of thought and study upon the part of competent officials. Many brilliant men (notably in France and in Germany where problems had an especial significance to the respective governments) had devoted their lives to the study of past wars for the purpose of drawing conclusions useful in planning for future emergencies.

The truth is that the world in its social and economic development had passed into a new epoch and this fact was not appreciated until it burst into painful realization during the World War. This is not a surprising matter. The chief educational force of the world is experience. Our peace time, industrial activities are carried on continuously. There is devoted to their prosecution a large proportion of our national intelligence. Yet the economic and industrial effects of such great inventions as the steam engine, the power loom, the cotton gin, the automobile, and so forth, have always emerged slowly and as developed by experience. It would be captious to criticize the military authorities of the nations for not exercising a greater power of pre-vision than the industrial leaders.

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To meet the industrial situations thrust upon them during the World War, the warring powers were forced to adopt administrative measures of the most drastic character. These were forged out upon the anvil of harsh necessity by the hammer of immediate expediency. Our principal allies found it necessary practically to supercede the previously existing munitions supply agencies by new bodies entirely under civilian control. In the United States our War Department supply branches survived, but the War Industries Board finally emerged as a coordinating agency over them. It laid an iron grip upon American Industry and with the help of other super-agencies such as the War Trade Board, the Shipping Board, the Fuel Administration, the Food Administration, the Railroad Administration and others, a fair semblance of order was ultimately brought out of chaos.

The ¹⁹⁴¹super-agencies were typically American in genesis and in spirit. They performed their work in a marvelously effective manner. The lessons which we learn from a study of their operations must ever be our guide in planning for a future emergency. But it would be a fatal thing to let matters rest as they are, going on as we did before the war with our military preparedness program but leaving the corresponding industrial program await the event. Congress, realizing this, created the office of the Assistant Secretary of War in 1920, with statutory duties. After four years' effort on the part of this office, it became apparent that the prosecution of the task would be very materially expedited if a group of officers could be relieved of all current work and given the opportunity to devote their entire time to the study of the question of industrial preparedness in its broadest aspects and from all angles. It was for this reason that the Army Industrial College was created.

I feel that the College has already demonstrated its value for the purposes intended. A very appreciable dividend has been paid upon its work to date. I am sure that its place in our military system will become of increasing importance as those who assisted in carrying the torch during the World War pass, one by one, from the scene and are gradually replaced by men whose knowledge of war conditions must come from study and deliberation rather than from actual experience.

I regret that the present necessity for trained personnel requires that, at the present time, the course be limited to five months. We hope that it may soon be possible to extend it to a full academic year. We also hope to gradually place the instruction upon a basis more nearly resembling that of the War College and of such civilian post-graduate schools as the Harvard School of Business Administration. This is not meant to be a reflection upon the existing course, but like everything else, colleges such as we hope this to become do not "spring full armed from the brain of Jove". They must be created through a process of gradual evolution and our present concern is that the foundation we are laying shall be sound and our progress as rapid as conditions permit.

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To those who are about to graduate, I extend my heartiest congratulations. It has been your lot to take the course during its formative stages. You have contributed much of constructive effort which will appear in the structure when it has reached its final form. Unfortunately, on account of the contingencies of the service, it appears to have been impracticable to assign all of you at the present time to work which would permit you to apply, immediately, the lessons you have learned and the conclusions you have drawn. I am sure, however, that in your future careers you will feel abundantly repaid for your recent efforts and the Army and our Government will secure that benefit which constitutes the only justification for the existence of this institution. Doubtless it will be but a short period until no important office having to do with the procurement activities of the War Department will be filled except by graduates of this College or officers having had equivalent training.

To those of you who are just entering upon the work of the College, I extend my heartiest wishes for success. Some of you were in Washington during the trying days of the World War and will have a first-hand appreciation of the difficulties which were encountered. All of you will find the work of the College of great interest and I can assure you that it is of the utmost importance to the War Department.

It is an especial pleasure to be able to welcome into the new class representatives of the Navy Department. There has been a marked and most gratifying tendency in our Government of recent years towards a breaking down of the rigid compartments into which its various branches had tended to segregate themselves. After all, we have but one national Government and anything which tends toward unity of purpose and action is good. Close cooperation between the Army and Navy is particularly important at all times. In time of war it is imperative. As Naval Officers you will bring to the College a viewpoint and an experience that will be invaluable in assisting us to develop the course until it shall cover, in an adequate manner, the entire ground pertaining to Industrial Preparedness. I trust that you will feel that you are full fledged members of the student body. I assure you that your comments and constructive criticisms will be as welcome and as valuable to us as those of any other members.

In concluding, I wish to again assure you of my heartfelt wishes for the success which I know you will have in the furtherance of this great work for our National Defense.