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Address  
by

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before the

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There probably is no subject about which more ill considered nonsense has been written and spoken than the subject of labor in its relation to national defense. Theories without number have been propounded and these have ranged all the way from considering the subject of transcendent importance, as when we were told that rivets would win the war, to considering it of no importance whatever, a problem which automatically would solve itself when the time comes.

Countless nostrums and panaceas have been advanced as solutions to the problem, frequently by those who claimed there was no problem. It is almost axiomatic that he who has the least knowledge of a subject is the first to suggest a remedy. Some of the nostrums may have been theoretically sound, though theory and practice do not always agree and nobody so far has devised a means of transforming these theories into plans for practical accomplishment.

Some of these theories set forth that in war and peace the Government should adopt toward labor the same attitude that industry takes. These entirely overlook the fact that industry has no one attitude in the matter. Some employers believe that management and labor are natural enemies with interests diametrically opposed, while others believe that success can come to the business only through the friendly cooperation of management and labor. The number of plans in operation for employee participation in ownership or management or both is practically infinite.

Another theory is that industry, or rather, that portion of industry which is engaged in the production of military requirements should be militarized. This overlooks three considerations of primary importance -- first, that there then would be existing side by side two entirely different methods of industrial operation, a thing which in itself easily could lead to national disaster; second, no workable plan for the administration of militarized industry ever has been even suggested; third, no plan for industrial rehabilitation and the return to normal conditions after the war has been suggested.

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In what I have to say I shall try to avoid theories and panaceas and lay a foundation of basic facts. On consideration of these it should be possible to develop a workable plan that will fit in with the other elements of industrial war planning now being developed by the Office of The Assistant Secretary of War.

Living beings in order to sustain life and pursue their efforts need, must have, three elemental and unrelated things -- air, water and food. True there are many other things, such as housing and clothing, that may be desirable, but living beings, even human beings, can live without any of them. In fact, certain savages do exactly that. However, neither savage nor civilized man can live without air, water and food. Neither of these things is of greater or less importance than either of the others.

Similarly, industry in order to sustain life and pursue its ends needs, must have, raw materials and labor. So far as modern industry is concerned, power must be added to these two, because the quantities of the products of industry that are required could not be produced by manual labor alone. It might be suggested that facilities also should be added to these three, but the facilities of one industry are the finished product of another. It may be stated, then, that, just as air, water and food are essential to human life, so raw materials, power and labor are essential to industrial life. And nobody can say that any one of the three is of greater or less importance than the other two.

The functions of the Planning Branch are to plan for the procurement of all the supplies needed directly or indirectly by the Army in a national emergency. Before its task is completed it will have to plan for the procurement of these three elements which are put together step by step to form the finished item.

As a preliminary to any procurement planning, we must know four things:

- First: What we want;
- Second: How much of it we want;
- Third: When we want it;
- Fourth: Where we want it.

Only after these factors are at least approximately known can we start to plan how we are to get what we want in proper amounts when and where it is needed.

When we have advanced this far we can determine the quantities of the various raw materials that enter into the manufacture of any item. Then we plan how we are to obtain these raw materials or devise and plan to procure acceptable substitutes for them.

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So far we have been dealing with inert things. So far as the raw materials themselves are concerned, they can be laid down anywhere where facilities for manufacture are available. The only limitation on this will be the availability of transportation to haul the raw materials there and the finished products away. If we learn that the procurement of raw materials in sufficient amounts within the time limit is impossible, we have recourse to the accumulation of a war reserve of these raw materials.

When it comes to the question of power other complications enter. In many cases, as with steam and hydraulically operated plants, the power must be applied virtually at the point of origin, where elaborate machinery is erected for its manufacture. Electric power, of course, gives a much wider choice of location, but there still remain many problems connected with the distribution of the war load. There are to be considered also many problems connected with the creation of a power war reserve, which may or may not consist largely of obsolete or obsolescent plants.

Power, however, while not inert, is still an inanimate thing and is subject to the absolute domination of man. Given time for the process, it can be created at will and, once created, it will obey the will of its creator within its limitations. Given the knowledge of our power requirements and the time and funds required, the power will be available and ready to do our bidding.

Labor in its broadest sense covers all human endeavor and in industry it includes both management and manual labor. It is accepted, however, that management in industry needs no war planning. True, during the period of change over from accustomed to unaccustomed tasks, there will be many cases where management will not function with its normal efficiency, but it will function and in a comparatively short time it will adjust itself to its new duties. If it cannot do this industry will fail in its task and there is no war planning that the War Department can undertake which will prevent this failure. However, the possibility of such a failure is too remote to be considered.

We have to consider in our war planning, then, only manual labor, the skilled, the semi-skilled and the unskilled workers who are to produce the finished items and their component parts which are required by the Army. The primary study of this subject differs in no respect from the similar study of either raw materials or power. We must know what and how much of it we want and where and when we want it. However, from this point on a new problem enters, because we now are dealing with human beings with human thoughts and human emotions and these must be given careful consideration when we plan

how best to utilize the labor that is available. It is the product of labor rather than the method of its employment in which we are interested.

Old adages are very tiresome, but sometimes they are true. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." What we want is to have the horse drink.

Power requirements can be determined fairly closely, though with no such close approximation to accuracy as is possible in the case of raw materials. The calculation of labor requirements is necessarily still less accurate. In the vast majority of cases it can be no more than an intelligent estimate based on a past experience which, in view of the constant change and improvement in manufacturing processes, is far from being an infallible guide. Frequently it can be no more than a guess.

In the beginning, we must consider that, taking the country as a whole, the supply of unskilled labor is ample. If this should prove to be untrue one of two things will happen, because here there is no possibility of substitutes or a war reserve. Either industry in such case must fail or unskilled labor must be imported from neutral countries. In either case there is no war planning which will help the situation to be done at this time. When we are confronted with that situation, we will find the foreign labor ready to come if the inducements are sufficient and it will come if the transportation is available. Whether or not this condition will obtain will depend entirely on the special situation existing at the time and not on a general situation such as our war planning considers.

However, there seems to be no doubt whatever that the total amount of unskilled labor in the United States will be ample. Certainly this was true during the World War. The distribution is another matter. If care is not exercised in the placing of war orders, the labor supply of one district will be overloaded and that of another district underloaded. This happened in numerous instances during the World War. Labor, of course, when it can, goes where the work is, but the migration of labor during war is in itself an evil to be avoided whenever possible. It not only creates transportation and housing problems of its own, but it disturbs the delicate balance of the mercantile system which has been developed for the supply of the population and, hence, further disorganizes transportation.

It is the duty of the Facilities Section so to cause the creation of new facilities and of the Allocations Section so to allocate both new and existing facilities as to minimize this migration of labor. They cannot do this unless they know the distribution of labor and industry's requirements of that labor to meet the war condition.

Our only source of information regarding these requirements is industry. Industry itself can make only an estimate, perhaps a guess, but at least it will be an estimate or a guess based on some measure of experience. Certainly, neither the Office of The Assistant Secretary of War nor that of any Supply Service is in a position even to make a guess. To date, we have been unable to get this information from industry in an amount to give it any value whatever. To that extent industry has failed in its share of the task of industrial war planning. There may be sufficient justification for the failure, but the fact remains.

What has been said of unskilled labor applies with nearly equal force to semi-skilled labor, which is recruited almost entirely from the more intelligent of the unskilled workers. A distinct advantage appears here in that a much larger proportion of women can be utilized in the performance of the semi-skilled than the unskilled tasks, this because the latter ordinarily require greater physical strength. Many of these women will be of those moved by a patriotic impulse who normally are not employed in industry. They form an important labor war reserve, but unfortunately, there are practically no statistics available which show either their total numbers or their distribution. Here again we need to learn from industry the number by sex of these semi-skilled workers who will be required and the length of time needed for their training.

Industry claims, and perhaps justly, that in the constant evolution of improved industrial processes, particularly in mass production, it is impossible to state the number of semi-skilled and unskilled workers that will be required for the performance of allocated tasks. From the standpoint of absolute accuracy, this unquestionably is true, but at least an estimate can be made and industry alone can make it. Certainly, no conscientious manufacturer in his cooperation in war planning would accept a schedule of production, especially for a non-commercial item, unless there was a clearly formulated plan for his procurement of the necessary raw materials and power and he would expect to state his requirements of these. Yet in the vast majority of cases that same manufacturer will calmly assume that the necessary labor somehow will be available and give it no consideration whatever.

If this be a defect in our planning system as developed to date, and it unquestionably is, the defect becomes much more apparent when skilled labor is considered. This is minimized, of course, in the case of commercial items. In the factories producing these there always are in training, consciously or unconsciously, unskilled and semi-skilled workers who in an emergency can be advanced to the skilled positions. True, they will not, in the beginning at least, have the skill of journeymen and they will spoil much work, but they nevertheless will get the work done and, with practice, their skill will increase.

the right direction, but few subsequent steps have been taken. The American Council on Education has done some work, but has been handicapped both by a lack of funds and the lack of an official status.

At the present time a study is being made to determine whether or not an organization similar to the National Screw Thread Commission, on which the various interested agencies of the Government, industry and labor would be represented, would be helpful. Organized labor unquestionably could be of great assistance. The International Association of Machinists, for example, now notes on the card of each member a general statement of his trade qualifications. A number of large industries, among them the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, have gone far in the adoption of job specifications which serve to standardize terminology for their own specific needs.

The subject has been taken up with the American Standards Association to learn what, if any, assistance that organization can render.

There is no question of the difficulty of the task, particularly in view of the constantly changing conditions in industry, which reduce the importance of some occupations, increase that of others and sometimes create entirely new ones.

An interesting example of this is the new trade of airplane mechanic, who must have an even higher degree of skill than the automobile mechanic of thirty years ago. Should the airplane of the future attain the standardization and popularity of the automobile of today we shall see mass production processes introduced and the consequent disappearance of this type of workman. This doubtless is an extreme case, but it shows the trend and indicates the difficulties attendant upon an attempt to secure a standard terminology.

In what I have said I have tried to indicate some of the difficulties that are being experienced in trying to determine what we want. Obviously, we must know this before we can say how much of it we want and until we know these things I can't see that it is a matter of any particular importance when and where we want it. All we can do is plunge ahead and hope for the best, but that hardly can be termed planning.

One thing we know definitely is that the war reserve required for the proper supply of the Army with some items is neither raw materials nor finished product, but labor. We have found this to be true in the case of optical instruments and machine tools, for example. The speed with which production can be attained is dependent solely on the skilled labor available.

How are we to build up this labor war reserve for the manufacture of these and other non-commercial items?

It has been proposed that we organize in industry a Workers' Reserve Corps composed of skilled men who in an emergency would leave their normal vocations to work in the arsenals, perhaps spending a fifteen or thirty day training period in the arsenals each year. If the arsenals were capable of expansion to a point where they could produce the Army's requirements that probably would be a wise policy. It so happens, however, that in any emergency, for which we would be justified in planning, the supplies needed would be so great in amount that the total capacity of the arsenals would have little, if any, effect on the situation. From a practical, manufacturing standpoint, they might as well go out of business the minute the requirements curve makes its upward jump.

It strikes me that that recommendation points exactly one hundred and eighty degrees from the true direction. As I see it, in peace time our arsenals or such of them as are devoted to the manufacture of non-commercial items, should operate on a full time basis with a full complement of the best workmen obtainable. These men should get the most varied possible training and economy in production should be sacrificed to that end. Then, should the emergency come, we would have available a corps of experts who could be scattered through industry as foremen, inspectors and instructors. In short, my personal belief is that our arsenals should be regarded as training schools rather than as manufacturing establishments. If, together with this, there were carried forward in the arsenals a systematic laboratory plan of developing the best possible mass production methods for every non-commercial item on the essential items list we could build up a labor war reserve that would be worth while.

In what has gone before I have touched on merely what might be termed the technical features of industrial planning. In such planning we try so to arrange matters that when the emergency comes the labor needed for production will be available in the places and at the times when it is needed. The principles involved do not differ materially from those involved in planning for the procurement of power and raw materials. From this point on, however, in the utilization of that which we have made available, there enters an entirely new factor, the psychological. Inanimate things will do our bidding without question. Human beings may do so or they may not.

Labor must perform its task if the war is to be prosecuted to a successful conclusion. Either it must do this through voluntary effort, the normal method of industry, or it must do it through some form of compulsion and military control. In either case, it must do it in the face of the efforts of unpatriotic agitators who will be "boring from within".

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The most popular form of compulsion that has been suggested as a panacea is the so-called "universal draft". By this it is understood that workers are to be drafted exactly as men for service with the colors are drafted. They will be members of the military service with the same emoluments as those with the colors, but they will be put to work in the factories and on the farms to produce the things that the armed forces will require. The theory of this is that all should render service and that those remaining at home should receive no greater compensation than those at the front.

At first glance that appears an entirely logical and reasonable proposition and one large organization of country wide scope has adopted it without qualification as its own. Although the idea is rather hoary with age, I think this organization even believes itself to be its originator. At any rate, this organization has adopted as the slogan in support of the plan, "Equal service from all and special profit for none". That sounds quite euphonious, but it so happens that we are seeking results rather than euphony. Before deciding whether or not the policy is good it would be well to learn what its results would be, not only the immediate results, but also the ultimate results.

As I understand it, our only object in any war in which we may be so unfortunate as to become involved will be to restore at the earliest moment possible a condition of peace that will enable our citizens to return to their normal pursuits and the blessings that are bestowed by life under our form of Government. If in the attempt to accomplish this we destroy the very thing we are trying to preserve our defeat will be as complete as though it had been administered by the enemy. And this is true whether the evil is immediately apparent or postponed until the end of the war.

One of the blessings we enjoy is freedom of action of the individual except insofar as restriction is necessary for the common good. Another is equality of opportunity for all. In time of national emergency it becomes necessary to restrict both of these, but our ideals and our system of Government both forbid the exercise of such restriction beyond the amount necessary to reach the common end, the successful termination of the war. Certainly, the extension of this restriction beyond the end of the war would indicate different ideals and almost certainly would involve some sort of change in our form of Government. I know of no more decisive defeat that any enemy could administer. Suicide causes as complete a death as murder.

There is no question of the right of any government, our own included, to draft every man, woman and child into its service in the event of war. The only question is regarding the wisdom of such a policy. On the other hand, our constitution, not only fails to

authorize, but specifically prohibits the drafting of any person into the service of any private enterprise in either war or peace. Therefore, the only way the draft of labor could be accomplished would be for the Federal Government to take over all industry, militarize the labor and tell it to go to work. If labor refused it would be necessary to assign armed forces to the task of compulsion.

How much work would be accomplished by such means and how long a revolution would be deferred if they were adopted are matters about which one guess is good as another, but, assuming for the moment that the system would work, what would be the result at the end of the war? Such a condition as described would be socialism in its most extreme form. How would we go to work to unscramble the eggs and return to a normal existence when the time to do so arrived? We can still remember the return of the railroads and the discussion of the Plumb Plan nostrum at the close of the World War.

My personal opinion is that it would not work, and this for a number of reasons. One of them is that such a system would fall of its own weight. In the first place, it would require an enormously complex machine for its operation. Nobody has suggested how these drafted workers are to be housed, fed, clothed, given medical care, promoted or disciplined. And even this takes no account of their families for whom similar provision must be made.

Another reason why such a system would be almost certain to fail is that its effect on the morale of the people would be bad. We will neither enter nor continue to participate in a war unless this action is demanded by the great mass of the people and the people will demand this only if their morale is high. If that morale is low the demand is apt to be for a quite different course of action. Further, what will be required will be, not the demonstration of the equity of a principle or course of action, but maximum production. I don't think anyone will combat the assertion that this ideal will be more nearly approached through voluntary effort than through any system of compulsion. The old adage again: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

As a matter of fact, the so-called "American Legion Bill" does not provide for universal draft or conscription for industrial purposes. Nevertheless, the propaganda for these features is continually dinned into our ears, with the resultant bad reaction against the adoption of a reasonable selective service law.

Through centuries of experience the best methods of organization of a military force for the accomplishment of a given end have been evolved. These are based on the principle that the primary duty of every individual is to render instant, implicit and unquestioning obedience to the will of his commander at all times and in all things.

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Through centuries of experience also the best methods of organization of an industrial force for the accomplishment of a given end have been evolved and these are based on an entirely different principle. Industry can no more operate successfully with a military organization and by military methods than the armies can operate successfully with an industrial organization and by industrial methods.

Another disadvantage that occurs to me is that the Government, and particularly the War and Navy Departments, would be sufficiently busy trying to solve the problems connected with the winning of the war without having all the problems of industry to solve in addition. There should be no Governmental interference with the normal methods of industry unless the success of the armed forces demands this. Should such a condition confront us the people will know it and they themselves then will make the demand.

An alternative method to the universal draft has been suggested. This is that we draft only the workers of military age and put them at work in the factories and on the farms. That would bring two classes of workers side by side, each with different rights, privileges and responsibilities. It is difficult to see how these could be equalized, however conscientious might be the effort to accomplish this. Little imagination is required to see the chaos that would result.

One officer who was a student at the Army Industrial College last year suggested that the best solution would be to declare all industries, other than those directly connected with winning the war, non-essential. This would throw an enormous number of men out of work and establish bread lines, with the result that the men would be glad to work for whatever they could get. I don't think that calls for much comment, except to invite attention to the fact that no Government agency during the World War had the temerity to declare any industry nonessential. The nearest approach to this was to declare certain occupations nonessential in the so-called "work or fight" order, but even these were few in number. What was done was to declare certain industries essential and, in the event of conflict, give them the preference through priorities.

The problem, as I see it, resolves itself into this:

First, we must learn our requirements of labor, particularly in the highly skilled trades essential in the fabrication of noncommercial items;

Second, we must devise some means of creating a labor war reserve of such workers;

Third, we must recognize the fact that the problem presents psychological difficulties at least as great as and possibly even greater

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than the technical difficulties.

In consideration of the third factor there are two entirely different types of planning to be considered -- that for action to be taken after M Day and that for action to be taken prior to M Day. The underlying principles governing the two are identical, though their method of application is quite different.

We hear much talk of "popular" and "unpopular" wars. No war, in our country at least, ever has been or ever will be "popular". However, if the time should come again, as it has in the past, when the majority of our people believe either that our national life is at stake or that our national pride should endure no further humiliation, then and then only we will be involved in war. Even in such case there always will be a vociferous unpatriotic and defeatist minority which will never rest in its efforts to defeat the will of the majority. One of the means to this end which it will adopt in the future, as it has in the past, will be to do whatever may be within its power to do to discredit the war making agency.

Human beings being what they are and ruled largely, in the mass at least, by their emotions rather than by their reason, these unpatriotic endeavors will attain a certain measure of success, great or small as may be. For this reason if for no other the war making agency, the Army, or the War Department if you prefer, should not be placed in a position where it will be brought into conflict with industry, either the capital or the management or the labor. Any agency which may be created for the purpose of controlling labor other than the direct employees of the War Department should be entirely separated from the War Department and either made independent or placed under some other executive head.

Another and equally potent reason why this should be true is that in any major emergency sufficiently grave to necessitate any form of labor administration the Army is going to be sufficiently busy with its effort to win the war. It certainly will have no time and should not be expected to solve the problems of industry in addition.

In any such emergency as we are considering in our war planning, an emergency in which our national life is jeopardized, we must anticipate that some form of selective service law will be required. Its only purpose will be to place every man, woman and child in the position where he or she can be of greatest service to the government, or rather, to the country. There is no reason why the personal preferences of any individual should be given the slightest consideration.

Skill in the intricate mechanical trades requires a high order of intelligence and the man who possesses that skill and that intelligence ordinarily is a high type of citizen with a powerful sense of

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civic responsibility. Such men are the first to rush to the recruiting office when a national emergency occurs and it is vastly to their credit that this is true. On the other hand, such men can render far more valuable service to their country by remaining in industry than by joining the colors and in industry they should be compelled to remain, whether they like it or not. There will remain plenty of men who can be better spared from industry, but who can render equally valuable service in the front line.

The selective service law should take effect M Day or the first possible moment thereafter, and at the same instant voluntary enlistments should be discontinued. During the World War more than 1,500,000 men enlisted before voluntary enlistments were discontinued. There is no means of determining how many of these men were highly skilled artisans, but there is no question that their number was enormous. That lesson should have been thoroughly driven home.

So much for our planning for action to be taken after M Day. There remains the planning for action to be taken prior to M Day in order to insure high morale among our people after the emergency has arrived.

Here again we have to consider the emotions of the American people. Again it is important that the people arrive at their decisions in matters of national policy entirely unbiased by any prejudice they may have against the war making agency. Entirely apart from any other consideration and as a definite feature of war planning, The War Department should endeavor to build up a high morale among the workers employed on War Department activities, directly or indirectly. This is an entirely feasible undertaking, but there have been occasions when the acts of the War Department or its representatives have caused an exactly contrary effect.

It seems to me entirely obvious that an assurance of fair treatment felt by civilian employees of the War Department and a feeling of contentment among them is bound to have wide effect in developing a friendly feeling toward the Army and counteracting the very visible activities of the numerous subversive, radical and pacifist agencies which are trying to destroy or at least cripple our national defense. That one thing would appear to be about as effective industrial war planning as it is possible to undertake.

CBR/emf

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