

Apr 26-1916

NATIONAL CANVASS FOR PREPAREDNESS REACHES HONOLULU

Members of Chamber of Commerce Will Express Attitude Towards Country's Defense

PROPOSITION TAKES FORM OF REFERENDUM

Chamber of Commerce of United States Appeals To Seven Hundred Auxiliaries

How the business men of Honolulu and of the United States generally feel toward the subject of national defense, will be ascertained within the next two weeks through a referendum conducted by the Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu in this city and by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States throughout the country.

It will be, it is said, the most thorough and comprehensive effort ever made to ascertain countrywide sentiment on a question so prominently before the people and congress. The referendum, just received here—the fifteenth since the organization of the national chamber of commerce—has been sent to seven hundred commercial bodies, including the Honolulu auxiliary, in every state, territory and insular possession in the Union, representing a grand total of more than 300,000 business men. Many American chambers of commerce abroad also will be heard from, and all auxiliaries of the national body will be asked to vote for or against recommendations contained in the report of a special committee, of which Bascom Little of Cleveland, Ohio, is chairman.

Recommendations of Committee

This committee recommends that, for the preservation of the peace and honor of the United States, the national defense forces, both on sea and land, should be so increased and the industrial resources so co-ordinated as to make fully available the military, industrial and financial strength of the nation. It is urged that a body in the nature of a council of national defense be created by law to assist in the development of an adequate and continuing policy for national defense.

The committee recommends that a staff of industrial mobilization be forthwith created by law and so organized and maintained in times of peace as to insure the most effective use of the economic resources of the United States in case of war. It is advocated that a program of naval construction be adopted immediately sufficient to restore the United States at least to its former position of second naval power in the Atlantic, with a surplus in the Pacific sufficient to protect the coasts, its possessions, its trade routes, the canal zone and adjacent territory.

The committee asks to have created by law a general staff for the navy by strengthening the present office of naval operations of the navy department, or otherwise. A recommendation is made that the regular army be increased until it, together with its trained reserves, shall be sufficient to furnish the first line of land defense as recommended by the general staff of the army, or by the council of national defense, or similar body after it has been created by law.

Universal Training Urged

The committee, recognizing the military obligation equally with the civic obligation as a fundamental duty of democratic citizenship in a republic and to establish a system which will affect every man alike, recommends that universal military training be adopted as a fundamental democratic principle of our military policy and be enforced by law to furnish adequate land, sea and industrial forces in peace and war.

The question of national defense was brought to the consideration of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States through resolutions presented by widely separated organizations. They were the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, the Knoxville Board of Trade and the New York Merchants Association. It revealed the fact that business men were actively thinking along the lines of in-

DEFENSE CANVASS IS COUNTRY-WIDE

Attempt Is Made To Determine Exact Sentiment of America Toward Preparedness

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hensive and at the same time cohesive whole.

Last Hour Legislation Ineffective

Arguing for a staff of industrial mobilization, the committee says our own experiences in the Spanish and Civil wars, and the subsequent experiences of other nations, up to and including the present war, have shown disastrous results through lack of immediately available industrial capacity. It is recognized that the success of armies and navies depends upon organized industry, that such organization of industry must be prearranged, and that it increases industrial efficiency in times of peace. Although about forty per cent of the army budget is now being spent for materials and transportation, no legislation has been proposed insuring and controlling their supply. No amount of "last hour" legislation can afford protection when trouble is imminent, and it can never take the place of prearranged organization and training.

Additional significant paragraphs from the committee report are quoted:

"The first line of national defense, by our geography, is the navy. And if attacked, the cheapest, most effective and safest defense by the navy can only be obtained if it is strong enough to seek out and destroy the enemy at sea and at a distance from our shores sufficiently great to render invasion impracticable and thus eliminate the alarm and subsequent commercial and financial paralysis and loss which accompany the immediate menace of such a danger."

An Adequate Regular Army

"To support the regular army and the national guard we have today only the untrained citizens and the unorganized industries of the country. Undoubtedly they constitute the real defensive strength of the nation, provided there be time to train the citizens and to divert our industries to the production of war materials. The experience of Great Britain in the present war in Europe plainly, however, teaches that at least six months will elapse before the first reinforcements of trained volunteers can be secured by this method, and it is doubtful whether they could be secured at all if our territory, our great industrial regions and centers of population, wealth, commerce and government along and near our coasts were not kept practically free from the invader. Calm consideration of the probable course of events in case we were invaded forces the conclusion that we would not be thus free from molestation during the months that would be needed to mobilize our resources in men and industries."

"With a strong navy and with the nucleus of an adequate army, together with a proper organization of our industrial resources, our diplomatic utterances should have so much weight that actual war would be a remote contingency. With such an organization for preparedness, on a firm working basis, it is inconceivable that a first-class power would attempt to invade this country unless the provocation were very great. If such a system be regarded as preventive insurance, it is insurance without cost, for it would be more than paid for by the development of industrial efficiency and harmony that would follow its adoption. Economy, rapidly of production, better distribution of labor, and a fine sense of collective responsibility on the part of everyone would result."

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The committee declares that to head in and co-ordinate the naval and military resources of the country with the economic resources, and place them all in perspective to accord with the needs and policies of the nation, calls for comprehensive consideration which can only be supplied by some body such as a council of national defense. Only by such a means can the views and plans of the military, naval, congressional and civilian elements of the national governments be revealed in a compre-

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