

## Efficiency Before Expediency

May 8, 1916

THE Army Reorganization Bill in so far as it refers to the militia, the proposed volunteer army sections, the reserve officers training corps, and other means of defense not particularly relating to the regular army, has been returned to the house of representatives by a dead-locked conference committee. Strenuous but unavailing efforts were made by the Republican floor leader, Mr. Mann, and other preparedness leaders of both parties in the house, to prevent the senate bill being sent to conference before the house had had the opportunity to discuss the new matter that had been inserted by the senate and the recent developments as the legality of the proposed "federalization" of the militia. Mr. Hay, the chairman of the military committee, and his "little army" supporters were able to prevent this but meeting stout opposition on the militia question in conference and being unable or unwilling to accept the volunteer army scheme, he has been forced to surrender to the popular demand.

There are abundant evidences that the militia is losing ground. The opinion of the judge advocate general of the army, a summary of which is given in another column of this issue, has convinced many Congressmen, that "federalization" is at best taking a chance with fate and that the militia of the several States is a "national" guard in name only.

Massachusetts has seen her legislature enact a law, within the past month, which has received Governor McCall's signature, and the unqualified approval of her militiamen almost without exception, will transfer the State force to the federal government as part of the proposed volunteer army. The State will provide armories now used by the militia for the use of the new force and such general and staff officers as are not needed have expressed their willingness to give up their positions. The adjutant general, who draws a comfortable competence from the State and who will be legislated out of office, has been the chief supporter of the measure.

There are hundreds of hard working officers of the militia who have expressed their intention to enter the new service should it prove impossible to federalize the militia. The opposition to the measure has been largely confined to the adjutants general of the States who are now receiving salaries. With one stroke of the pen they would be without employment and consequently without salaries should the inoculation of federalization fail "to take" or the country turn to a volunteer force. These officers have a strong political organization in the National Guard Association which body has been particularly active in operating a lobby against the volunteer army and for the pay features of the militia sections of the bill.

Four years ago the federal government, acting under the authority given by the Dick Law, was attempting to organize the militia into brigades and divisions. There were then in the militia, bobtail battalions, bobtail regiments, divisions which were divisions only in name, and general and staff officers without commands literally by the hundreds. In a well balanced military organization, battalions, regiments, brigades and divisions must have a uniform organization. The enforcement of this provision of the law meant that many hundred unnecessary officers must either accept lower rank and consequently less pay when at maneuvers or else leave the militia. The National Guard Association at its convention at Chicago produced opinion after opinion to the effect that the militia, under the Constitution, could not be "federalized" and that the war department was without authority to enforce the provisions of the Dick Law. This was only four years ago and behold, today here are the same officers, the same organization, crying that there exists no constitutional barrier to "federalization."

There are many high ranking officers of the militia who are thoroughly competent and of these Major General O'Ryan, who commands the New York troops, is a notable example. He is a graduate of the Army War College and is regarded by army officers as an efficient general officer. Being efficient himself he has made an efficient division of troops in his own State and for this work the State pays him \$9000 a year and doesn't begrudge the payment. General O'Ryan very naturally opposes the volunteer army scheme and believes that the militia can be federalized. If the militia can be made a federal force he will retain his rank and pay, if it cannot, and the volunteer army is accepted, he will not be able to draw \$9000 from the federal government while general officers of the regular service are available at a smaller

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Many of these adjutants and generals are not soldiers in any sense. They know or should know that many of the state forces are not competent, are not even fourth line troops. General Foster of Florida is the president of the National Guard Association and at the head of the energetic lobby to urge congress to accept the militia and decline the volunteers. This is the army he commands in his own State and which he wishes the country to believe is a dependable unit in a national force.

The recently published report to congress of the war department's bureau of militia affairs shows that there are in Florida in the organized militia,

1320 enlisted men, of whom 323 were absent from the official annual inspection, and the "number not actually present twenty-four times for drill instruction" during the year, as required by law, exclusive of field or camp service, was 684, more than half of all. The number who attended consecutive days (two) for practise marching, out of a total of 1320 enrolled, was sixty-four, although paid for such service.

The United States must have a national defense. We have had too much shirking of unpleasant acts. If we are to have real defense we must deal with conditions as they are, not as we wish they were.

Our defense must be national. If we have a force which under the constitution cannot be completely controlled by the national government we must create another force and take the best and all of the first named force that we can put into the second force. And we must have an army in being. Besides the regular army there must be a citizen army, nationalized, and efficient. And this citizen army to be efficient must be wholly under the war department. We can not afford to spend money for organizations like that of Florida, to name no other States, whose comparative worth in peace times is set forth in black and white in war department reports for all to see.

Hawaii is ready for the federalization of her militia, if it can be accomplished, and failing that, a reinforced brigade will make an effective unit of national volunteer force. There are few State units to compare with what the Hawaii militia is well on the way to being.

Let us be honest with ourselves in this preparation business and call spades spades even if it hurts.