

Defense Society's Workings Shown

[From New York Evening Post, Feb. 12, 1916.]

Some of the inside details of the campaign of the American Defence society for funds and support were revealed today by George M. Baxter, who was dismissed recently from his position as organizing and financial secretary of the society, after the publication of a story reflecting upon his character. It was said in the story that Baxter had been a member of the "We Boys" crowd, which was prominent some years ago in uptown hotels. A meeting of the trustees of the society was hurriedly called, and Baxter was summarily dropped.

Of more interest than Baxter's defence of his character is the story of the society's inner workings. It appears that Baxter organized the appeals for funds on a percentage basis, and that he was successful in raising many thousands of dollars. There were constant bickerings among the backers of the society in regard to policies, politics, and funds. Mr. Baxter's statement, which is in the form of an open letter to the trustees of the society, is, in part, as follows:

"When I approached you in August last with a proposition to take over the work of raising funds for the American Defence Society, Inc., and to finance myself and my staff throughout, assuming personally all risk of loss, and leaving the society free of any moneyed obligation in connection with such a department, you accepted willingly—even gladly. You received from me references which you have frequently declared were entirely satisfactory, and we entered upon a tentative agreement for a trial period on a basis of 25 per cent commissions.

"Later, when I had proved to you the practicability of my plans, and a national campaign for financial support had begun, we entered into a contract providing that my management of field secretaries, etc., should continue until December 31, 1916, and that my commission should be raised to 50 per cent—out of which I was to pay all telegraph and telephone bills, all salaries and commissions to field secretaries, canvassers, and others whom I employed; that I should furnish my own office (which I already had), and pay all other costs incident to my department—which you chose to treat as a branch, or chapter, of the national organization.

Building Up the Office

"In the process of building up my department, my office employees and I frequently worked from fourteen to eighteen hours a day, including Sundays and holidays, and I had spent (on this purely speculative basis) a considerable sum of money before I began to see results. Telegraph charges alone for my department during only a part of the month of January approximated \$3,500."

Mr. Baxter added:

"During the uncertainty of the 'trying out' period your chairman and your secretary frequently besought me not to become discouraged; and when the tide turned they were most profuse in their congratulations and in their show of gratitude. They lost no opportunity of expressing their thanks to me for having pulled the society out of its slough of financial despond; they frequently congratulated themselves on their astuteness in selecting me, 'over perhaps a dozen other applicants' as their fund-raiser and salary-payer; they discussed freely with me their yearnings, hopes, ambitions; their trouble with the National Security league (from which they had seceded as employees in order to establish a society of their own), and Mr.

Thompson assured me many times that whatever he wanted he could get, because he held the society 'in the hollow of his hand'—the articles of incorporation having been so framed that his powers as chairman were plenary, for which boast a reading of the society's constitution and by-laws will afford ample justification.

"The final expression of appreciation on the part of your chairman was in the shape of a telegram of felicitation to me on Christmas Day; and on the part of your secretary the gift of a walking stick, with expressions of his kind regards.

Political Difficulties

"During the process of building up the society's financial end, my staff and I had many difficulties to contend against, not the least of which was of a political nature. It was excessively difficult to convince a skeptical public that a society having as the chief figures on its numerically modest board of advisers such names as those of Messrs Theodore Roosevelt, David Jayne Hill, Charles J. Bonaparte, and Truman H. Newberry was not pronouncedly of a republican-progressive bias. The charge was denied at headquarters, and we were authorized to say to all invitees or inquirers that the organization was 'absolutely unbiased politically.' With that understanding many people subscribed—but many others still refrained.

"Seeing the urgent necessity of neutralizing the political complexion of the board of advisers (if the American Defence society was to live up to its claim of being a national, patriotic, non-political organization), I insisted on many occasions that some democratic names should be added to the advisory board. The only democrat (to my knowledge) that we had on the advisory board, Mr. Perry Belmont, had resigned therefrom; and through my insistent urging Messrs. Henry Watterson, Hilary A. Herbert, James J. Hill, August Belmont, Jacob M. Dickinson, and William F. McCombs were approached with a view to their joining the board of advisers. Col. Watterson and Mr. Herbert, I believe, did not even reply to your secretary's letters; Mr. Hill did reply, but refused his consent (I learned long afterward) to the use of his name in that capacity—notwithstanding which fact his name was placed on the stationery by some one at headquarters, and continued there until Mr. Hill decisively demanded its removal. Messrs. August Belmont, Jacob M. Dickinson, and William F. McCombs were personally besought by my friend Major J. J. Dickinson, on behalf of the society. The first two gentlemen declined, and Mr. McCombs assented. Later on I was informed that Mr. Perry Belmont had withdrawn his resignation, and his name went back among the members of the advisory board.

"With the nominal co-operation of these democrats it was much easier to interest a public that resented the mere appearance of partisanship in a supposedly purely patriotic body. For a time matters progressed smoothly, except for the constant opposition of the National Security league, and my almost daily efforts to spur the society into something like a decent show of activity, and the exertion of all the restraining influence that Major Dickinson and I could bring to bear upon your executive heads to prevent an open attack upon the administration—which we felt would have been both unfair and impolitic. Major Dickinson and I were the only democrats, so far as I am aware, connected in any way with the actual

conduct of the affairs of the society.

"That fact did not appear personally to popularize either of us; and Major Dickinson, then acting as the chief of the speakers' bureau, was rewarded by an early dismissal for his efforts to keep the society politically neutral. I did not receive my conge at that time, for two very excellent reasons: I possessed a contract with the society until the end of this year, and my efforts were not only supplying the financial bread, but also large supplies of butter and jam, for headquarters' use.

"Shortly after young Mr. Philip Roosevelt felt the high patriotic impulse to devote his wide experience and prodigious journalistic genius to the cause of preparedness (for a salaried consideration), it became evident to me that the partisanship I had been combating was again rampant. This was confirmed by Mr. Thompson, who one day informed me that since the National Security league had 'come out strongly for the administration at Washington' (the words are Mr. Thompson's), he and his active colleagues had determined that the American Defence society should take 'the other side of it.' My protest against the impolicy of this, and the lack of good faith with our subscribers (all of whom had been assured of the 'absolutely nonpartisan' character of our organization) were of no avail.

"President Wilson's policies and utterances were openly damned up hill and down dale, and the next issue of the society's monthly organ, 'American Defence,' under the editorial charge of Philip Roosevelt, came out with a highly offensive full-page cartoon of Mr. Wilson in chummy conference with a typical grafting politician, while he disdainfully waved aside a United States army officer, who was depicted trying to present the President with 'facts.' To this was added the astounding editorial statement:

"Plainly he (Mr. Wilson) is trying to do just as little as he possibly can to put the country in a state of defence, instead of trying to do just as much as he possibly can."

Mr. Baxter goes on to tell of the society's efforts to raise money which, it appears, were without large results until he took charge of the campaign. Then came the publication of the story reflecting upon Mr. Baxter and the action of the society in demanding his resignation. The statement adds:

"With a magnificent courage best symbolized by the white rabbit, they ruthlessly sacrificed their benefactor in their panic scamper for cover, showing withal the same degree of gratitude that characterize the animal which bit the hand that fed him. Since then, doubtless mistaking my silence for timidity, your executive heads have made overtures to certain of my employees, and have indicated their intention to continue the business of raising funds along the lines that I inaugurated! This is Ossa piled on Pelion. While under the present distressing circumstances the maintenance by me of the expensive staff that I had assembled is both impossible and useless, the effort of the society to win over my trained associates (after already forcibly taking my business from me) must strike the most elemental mind as being grotesquely unjust."

Mr. Baxter demands the restoration of his position, and damages. He says that he will resign immediately after reinstatement, as he does not care to work with the society. He continues:

"And, at any rate, I should not care to resume relations with the American Defence society until your chairman has explained why he knowingly misrepresented the facts to the Guaranty Trust Company when

he wrote that institution that my compensation was \$150 a week against gross commissions of 10 per cent. Or until other officials of the board of trustees have explained why the financial report made to Mr. Theodore Roosevelt and other members of the board of advisers at their joint meeting at the Biltmore on January 5 was brought down only until the preceding December 15; and why the report showed receipts of only \$45,000, when the actual amount taken in (including December 15) was more than \$48,000?

"Also it might prove interesting to learn of their justification for the statement printed in the public press at the time of my dismissal that the gross receipts up to that day 'had approximated \$60,000,' when the actual moneys turned over by me, as shown by itemized memoranda given me at headquarters and headed 'American Defence Society Members Secured Through Mr. Baxter's Efforts,' sets forth the indisputable fact that considerably over \$80,000 gross had been obtained for the society through my endeavors.

"Perhaps these discrepancies on the part of the youthful arbiters of America's destiny at 303 Fifth Avenue may be due to inexperience, or to bewilderment heeling closely on the possession of real money; or, again, it may be that their lack of accuracy was due to their time being taken up by daily conferences on the shortcomings of the administration, the needs of the army and navy, and their insistence on the immediate construction of forty-eight first-class battleships.

THE SEDITIOUS FORD

The conference committee on national preparedness is "preparing" to try Henry Ford for treason. The committee has issued a communication to the newspapers. In it, Mr. Ford's advocacy of peace is termed treasonable.

The committee gets personal. It charges that Mr. Ford's city, Detroit, was captured once because it was "unprepared." This was in the war of 1812. It seems that if it was not for Mr. Ford's peace plans the extreme militarists and powder and armor-makers on the committee would be able to make Detroit bristle with cannon.

If Mr. Ford is not careful, the committee will leave Detroit out of its "preparedness" campaign. The Canadians, or the Germans after they have overrun Canada, will sack his motor car plant and thus strike a death blow at the farmers of the middle west. After destroying this plant and taking its contents, it is presumed that the enemy will ramble right along over the remainder of the country at the best Ford speed. Here is the committee's indictment:

"The Conference Committee on National Preparedness, composed of the representatives or officers of eleven societies with an aggregate membership of several million persons, does hereby denounce as un-American, unpatriotic and in its effect closely approaching treason, the attempts of Henry Ford to prevent the nation from putting itself in a condition to resist aggression or invasion.—Kansas City Post.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Psychologist Tells How to Study Concentration.—"Concentration," by F. W. Sears, master of psychology, is a discussion of the means by which to develop the power to concentrate all one's energies on a single task. The author views concentration as the one essential to success. His book, issued by the Centre Publishing Company, Suite 528, 108-110 West Thirty-fourth street, New York, N. Y., sells for 50 cents.