

Sec'y Baker Reviews Work of War Department

A Washington special to the New York World, dated Jan. 28, says: Newton D. Baker, secretary of war, today presented the case of the administration in the matter of the conduct of the war.

He answered the charges that were made by Senator Chamberlain, which alleged the collapse of the military establishment, and went beyond that to include in his statement a comprehensive survey of what the war department had done, of how it had been done, of why it had been done, of the results thus far achieved and of the promise of the future.

For four hours the secretary addressed the hearing arranged by the senate committee on military affairs. In that time he spoke between 35,000 and 40,000 words. He avoided any tendency to pass a personal judgment upon the operations of his department, leaving such conclusions to be drawn by the facts he presented and the opinions offered by experts.

His easy manner, his well pitched voice, his fluency of speech and his grasp of the subject held the 400 or 500 men and women who heard him in close attention. He spoke extemporaneously, referring now and then to statistical data that lay before him on the table. He was rarely interrupted.

It is merely a statement of fact to say that Mr. Baker produced a deep impression. This is attested by the expressions of the members of the committee, including several who had opposed the secretary on previous occasions, and it is further proved by the impression produced upon the President, who was described as being more than satisfied with the secretary's exposition and certain that it will carry conviction to the country at large. He received a complete transcript immediately upon the close of the session.

The secretary developed his theme largely along the lines of showing that the underlying principles animating the conduct of the war were reasonable, well considered, authoritative and efficacious.

He reached an important climax and stressed its importance when he declared that a real measure of America's preparation and participation lay in the fact that we shall have more than half a million troops in France early in this year, and by the end we shall have more than 1,500,000 ready for the front, well trained and wholly equipped, ready to bear their share of the burden.

WAR PROBLEM FACED BY THE UNITED STATES

Secretary Baker closed his testimony before the senate committee with a general statement of the war plan and how it was developed. He said:

"Now, gentlemen, about the plan of the war. It will be remembered that this war broke out in August, 1914. We went into it in April, 1917, so that for two and a half years, or more than two and a half years, the war had been going on. It was not as though war had broken out between the United States and some country, each of them prior to that time having been at peace with one another and with everybody else, so that an immediate plan should be made in the United States for conducting war against its adversary, but we were coming into a war which had been going on for two and one-half years, in which the greatest military experts, all the inventive genius, all of the industrial capacity of these greatest countries in the world had for two and one-half years been solving the problem of what kind of war it was to be and where it was to be waged.

"It was not a thing for us to decide where our theatre of war should be. The theatre of war was France. It was not for us to decide our line of communications. Our line of communications was across three thousand miles of ocean, one end of it infested with submarines. It was not for us to decide whether we would have the manoeuvring of large bodies of troops in the open. There lay the antagonists on opposite sides of No Man's Land in the trenches at a death grapple with one another. Our antagonist was on the other side of that line, and our problem was and is to get over there and get him.

HOW NATION MAKES WAR, AS REVEALED BY BAKER

A Washington special to the New York World, dated Jan. 28, says: Here are some of the striking points made by Secretary Baker before the senate military committee today:

We will have 500,000 men in France early in 1918 and we will have 1,500,000 ready to ship to France during 1918. At this hour we have a fighting army in France, seasoned and trained in the warfare.

The German government is still mystified regarding the number of men now in France.

We are in the war to hit and to hit hard. Our problem is not one of star playing, but of team playing.

France and Great Britain are supplying artillery to the American forces, because they themselves wished to do so, as they had an excess on hand and wished to save ships for more vital necessities.

Ships are the crux of this problem, and every time we can use French industrial resources instead of making and sending our own products we are doing it.

The American army in France, large as it is, and the American army to be sent there, large as that is, are and will be provided with artillery of the type they want as rapidly as they can use it.

When we went into the war the standard of the army uniform was 75 per cent wool and 25 per cent cotton. But now every yard is of virgin wool, with a large increase in its strength.

There is no discrimination in the treatment of white and negro troops.

Sixty million shells are under manufacture for delivery this year.

No army ever assembled anywhere was ever fed as ably, as well, as nutritiously and as appetizingly.

Gen. Wood was recognized by common consent in the army as the most capable to select camp sites and inaugurate a training camp system.

There are things that could have been better done, but our effort is to learn.

The German army, best prepared in the world, furnishes an obsolete rifle for practice until men learn to take care of a better weapon.

We have built in France docks, terminals, sent over dock machinery, cranes, even piles, warehouses at ports of disembarkation for the storage of vast supplies needed before distribution. We are taking over and are in process of rebuilding a railroad 600 miles long from our ports of disembarkation to our base of operation.

"It was not the problem of doing it our way and letting everybody else take care of himself. In the first place, we were going to fight in France, not on our own soil and not on our adversary's soil, and therefore at the very beginning it was obvious that the thing we had to do was not to map out an ideal plan of campaign, not to have the War College, with its speculative studies of Napoleon and everybody else, map out the theoretically best way to get at some other country, but it was the problem of studying the then existing situation and bringing the financial, the industrial and the military strength of the United States into co-operation with that of Great Britain and France in the most immediate and effective way. That problem could not be decided here

"I fancy in this audience there are men who have been in the trenches. The altogether unprecedented character of that problem is the thing which every returning visitor tells us can not be described in words, can not be put down in reports. It is a thing so different from anything else that ever went on in the world,

so vast in its desolation, so extraordinary in its uniqueness that it must be seen and studied on the ground in order to be comprehended at all.

"It is easily imagined that we might have perfected an army over here and carried it across the ocean and found it wholly unadapted to its task, and it might well have been that the army that we sent over was just one thing that they did not need, and that some other thing which we might have supplied would have been the thing essential to their success.

"So that from the very beginning it was not a question of abstract speculation here, but a question of study there to find out where our shoulder to the wheel could be put.

CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGES

"They realized that, and so Great Britain sent over to us Mr. Balfour and Gen. Bridges and a staff of experts. They came over here and you saw Mr. Balfour in the house of congress and at the White house, in public meetings at one place and another, but the group of experts whom they brought over with them you did not see much of, and yet they distributed themselves through the war department and their ordnance expert sat down with Gen. Crozier, their supply experts with Gen. Sharpe and his assistants, their strategists sat down with the army war college, and all over this city there were these confidential groups exchanging information, telling how the thing was over there, and what we could do, what they advised us to do, what experience they had had in developing this, that and the other implement of supply, how certain plans which one might naturally have evolved out of the past experience of the world had been tried there and found not to work at all.

"They were exchanging information, giving us all that they thought was helpful and then came Joffre, with his wonderful reputation and his great charming personality, and he made a great figure here and we welcomed him. It was a tremendous inspiration to see the hero of the Marne, but with him came this unobserved staff of fifteen or twenty or twenty-five young men, the most brilliant men in the French Army, strategists, mechanical experts, experts in arms, experts in supplies, experts in industry and manufacture, and they told us not merely the formal and military problems, but they brought over with them men who were in from the beginning, in their re-organizations of their industries, in their mobilization of their industrial plants, and we sat down with them in little groups until finally we collated, and collected and extracted all the information which they could give us from their respective countries.

"And every country which has been brought in the war has brought us that sort, or sent us that sort of a staff of experts, and it has been necessary to compare notes, and with this as a basis, to form such an idea as might be formed of what was the thing for us to do over there.

GREW OLD IN THE TELLING

"But that was not enough. They admitted that it was impossible to draw that picture. They could describe to us and bring the specifications and drawing for a piece of artillery but they could not tell us why the British theory of the use of artillery was by the British preferred to that of the French. They could not picture to us a barrage of heavy howitzers as compared to a barrage of 75 mm. guns. They could not picture to us the association of aircraft, balloons and mobile aircraft with artillery uses. They could tell us about it, but even while they told us the story grew old.

"The one thing they told us from the very beginning to the end was that this war, of all others, was not a static thing, that our adversary was a versatile and agile adversary, that every day he revamped and changed his weapons of attack and his methods of defense, that the stories they were telling us were true when they left England and France, but an entirely different thing was probably taking place there now; and they told us of large supplies of weapons of one kind and another which they had developed in France and England and which, even before they got them in sufficient quantity manufactured to take them from the industrial plants to the front