

# When the War Trust Robs No More

[From the San Francisco Star.]

Word comes from Washington that congress is to be asked to appropriate for national defense an increase of about \$150,000,000 more than was appropriated last year; that the estimate for increased army and navy amounts to \$842,000,000 for the next six years; that for new war vessels and more men in the navy the estimate is, in round figures \$500,000,000; and that the plans contemplate an army of more than a million trained men within the next six years.

Is such a war establishment justified? If it is justified, how will the government raise the hundreds of millions of dollars to pay for it? And at the end of six years how many more hundreds of millions will be demanded for the same purpose?

Let it be taken for granted that we need a larger navy; let it be admitted that we need an adequate navy. Secretary Daniels would have all the new ships built by the navy department, and would have the government manufacture its own ammunition and other supplies for the navy. But what will congress do about the secretary's recommendations? Congress is not yet emancipated from the unholy influence of the war trust.

It is evident that the war trust is very busy creating sentiment for a greater navy and a greater army. For years it has been busy at that job. Thursday of this week came a dispatch from Washington saying that confidential reports received at the navy department reveal that Great Britain and Germany have already anticipated the increases proposed in our new plan of naval preparedness; that by 1923 Great Britain will have 80 dreadnaughts of the first class, and that Germany will have 33; and that England is planning to have as many warships as

Germany and the United States combined.

Now, our own advocates of preparedness—at least, the more noisy ones—insist that we should have a navy large enough to meet the navies of any two powers, and some demand that our navy be large enough to meet the combined navies of all other powers. If we go into the race for big navy preparedness, where shall we stop? Will it be possible to stop short of bankruptcy? We are willing to admit the need of an adequate navy, but what is the limit?

From Paris came a queer Associated Press cablegram, Oct. 20, under the head "To Seize the United States." Remembering what the war trust has done in the past to promote the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars for "preparedness," as shown by Representative Tavenner, it is a safe guess that the Paris dispatch is another war trust fake to create a "preparedness" panic in this country.

In order to raise the money for the greatly increased navy and army, it is said that congress will be asked to extend the emergency war tax—which expires December 31—and to retain the present duty on sugar beyond next May, when under the present tariff law sugar will go on the free list. But even these proposed measures would not produce the needed money. The money must be raised by increased taxation on consumption, which means increased taxation of the poor and does not mean increased taxation of the very wealthy or of special privilege.

Not a word has come from Washington suggesting that needed increase of revenue be derived by direct taxation of special privilege, or by higher income taxes on those whose incomes are derived from swollen fortunes. As is always the

case with indirect taxation, "The Man With the Hoe" must contribute proportionately far more of the tariff taxes than the millionaire. Is it just that the government should always search the slim purses of the poor when more revenue is needed?

It is said that the war department wants \$72,000,000, more than last year, of which \$46,000,000 is to be spent for reserve material and coast defenses, and \$26,000,000 for new armies—regular and continental. To this question, as to most other questions, there may be two sides, but it is difficult to understand the necessity for such increases in expenditures for the army. Recently, during the training camp season, it was asserted that a few weeks in a training camp would train the untrained man. If that be true, why the necessity for the long and elaborate training proposed?

October 16 came a dispatch from Washington saying that "employers throughout the United States—corporations, manufacturers, professional men, tradesmen and business men of all classes—are to be asked to contribute, as their share in the national defense, permission for their employes to engage, without serious financial loss, in two months' military training during each of three years" and that this is an essential part of the plan for raising in the next six years a citizen army of 800,000 men—which, with a regular army of 140,000 men and 300,000 reserves would give us a trained force of 1,200,000 men, exclusive of state militia.

It appears, then, that the great plan of preparedness—as far as the army is concerned—depends to a large extent on the willingness of employers to permit employes to receive military training. But it does not appear that employers are to be trained for the trenches. Employers are to contribute wages for employes while the latter are training, and the employes will contribute their lives.

The most sinister aspect of the whole business is this fact, that the men most active in the movement for spending hundreds of millions of dollars in preparing for war are the men who would reap millions and tens of millions of dollars from the large appropriations—if private contracts are let for armor, ammunition and other supplies. Not only is there a war trust in this country, but it is well known that the war trust is international, and it has for years deceived and cheated the people of the United States, of France, of Great Britain, of Germany and other countries. Its business is to deceive and scare the people, and then cheat them.

If, as is reported from Washington, President Wilson is in favor of the enormous expenditures proposed, we can not doubt his absolute sincerity. As the servant of the people it is his duty to recommend what he believes the people want. It is not his desire, to tell the people what they may or may not have. It may be that he has received from the magazines and newspapers the impression that public opinion in this country is overwhelmingly in favor of incurring the enormous expenses for increased preparedness. It must be admitted that the preponderance of noise is on that side.

## PREPAREDNESS MUST BE PAID FOR

The American people can not eat their cake and have it. If they want preparedness for national defense they must expect to pay for it. Preparedness is something that

can be obtained only by the expenditure of money.

The national government is facing a budget of \$1,240,000,000 but in the main this is a war budget. Excluding the postal appropriations, which are for a department that is practically self-sustaining so far as operating expenses go, the administration and congress must provide approximately \$900,000,000 for the next fiscal year. Of this sum \$430,000,000 is for the army and navy, \$170,000,000 for pensions and \$23,000,000 for interest on the public debt, which is a war charge.

In these three items alone we have \$623,000,000 for wars past and wars to come and preparedness for war. The total war charge is more than two-thirds of all the regular disbursements of the government, and next year this charge will far exceed the total ordinary revenues of the government in 1909.

It is evident that there can be no sweeping economies in a government in which two dollars out of every three must be spent for military purposes, and while it is the duty of congress to save every dollar that can be saved, the amount will not be large. It can not be large unless all the civil activities of the federal authority are to be suspended.

The American people face the certainty of an increase in national taxation, and they might as well face it philosophically unless they believe that national security from foreign aggression is not worth what it costs.

\* \* \* \*—New York World.

## THE "PORK BARREL"

The Washington, D. C., Times throws out the genial suggestion that Mr. Bryan is organizing the "pork barrel" brigade to defeat preparedness, and as evidence submits his call for better roads and more internal improvements.

Here we have a hint of what is ahead if the militarists have their way, the money the people need for better living will be "pork" to the end of the chapter, while the money expended for uniforms and gunpowder will be "patriotism."

Nothing is more interesting to the student of history than the supreme contempt militarism has always had for industrialism, and the freedom with which that contempt has been expressed at the very time that the industrial community was taxing itself to the limit to support an idle military aristocracy.

But Mr. Bryan, if he be given credit for no other talent, has for a talent the sort of debate suggested by this talk of better roads as "pork." If when he gets into action he does not make the militarist section exceedingly weary of the "pork" suggestion, he will have lost his cunning.—Des Moines (Ia.) Register and Leader.

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