

Our Aviation Problem



DAVID J. WALSH
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SENATOR WALSH (MASS.) WOULD HAVE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, COMBINING ARMY, NAVY AND AIR

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

YOU'VE often heard of Eddie Rickenbacker, our American ace-of-aces. Well, he started recently on an aerial tour of the United States. He was to visit all the states and to report to the federal government on the condition and availability of landing fields and on other aviation matters. Probably he had a good machine; it is to be presumed that he had the best available. And what did Eddie Rickenbacker report? Nothing, nothing at all. His machine was forced down four days in succession. Thereupon he abandoned the trip.

In Chicago, not long ago, a local flyer took up a bridegroom and bride for a short flight. They were honeymooning and wanted the best there was going in the way of seeing the sights. The machine crashed. Both passengers were killed. President Harding was making an open-air address recently in Washington. A commercial flyer took his plane full of sightseers so close that the President's voice was drowned out and so close to the vast crowd that had the plane fallen scores would have been killed and injured.

These are but three incidents—any issue of a newspaper will furnish more—which clearly indicate, according to the experts, that aviation in the United States is at loose ends and that the situation is so bad that something really must be done about it.

By way of emphasis to our own do-nothing policy, the experts declare, Europe is dotted with landing places and lined with air routes. European nations are stimulating commercial aviation with subsidies.

On the other hand, according to the experts, the results of systematic development are shown by the fact that the air mail service of the Post Office Department has just completed a year without a single fatal accident, with 1,750,000 miles covered.

In congress the Wadsworth-Hicks bill is pending. This provides for a United States bureau of commercial aviation.

Out of congress the National Aeronautic association and the Society of Automotive Engineers are cooperating the drafting of an aeronautic safety code, with the assistance of experts of the bureau of standards. Pending the passage of the Wadsworth-Hicks bill the draft of its safety code is tentative, but its principal provisions will include:

Inspection of aviators and aircraft in connection with the granting of licenses to pilots and air transportation companies; prohibiting of dangerous proximity of aircraft in flight; rules governing personnel and equipment of aerodromes, including medical and signal equipment; aircraft radio regulation rules for landing fields; lighthouses for night flying and landing.

In the senate the other day Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana read into the Congressional Record an article, "Our Aviation Problem," contributed to the New York Times by Senator David J. Walsh of Massachusetts, saying that it was an interesting discussion of the problem of aviation, pertinent to the discussion of the bill now before the senate.

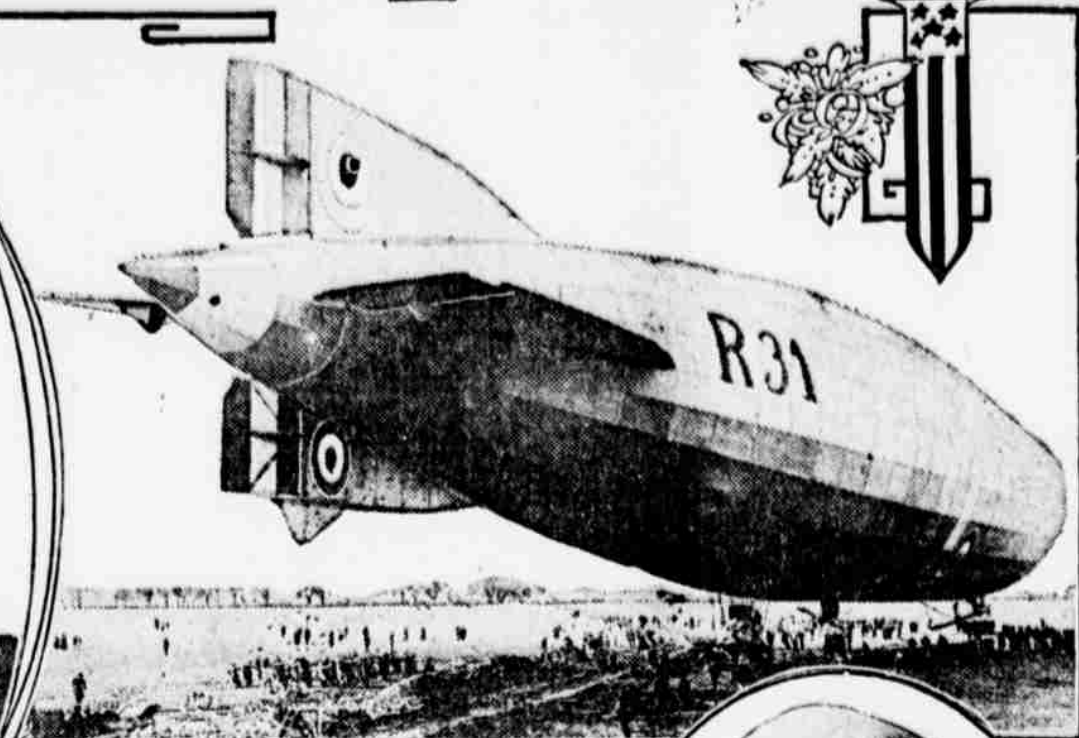
Senator Walsh of Massachusetts in this article says that what we now need is the consolidation of the Army and Navy departments into the Department of National Defense, with a secretary at its head, and three undersecretaries for the army, navy and air.

Here are some of the points made by Senator Walsh of Massachusetts in the article:

"It is regrettable that in or out of congress there is so little interest in what our government is doing, or rather failing to do, to stimulate interest in aeronautical matters and to foster and encourage in every manner possible this most important means of defense and transportation which has come to be generally acknowledged among progressive nations as of vital necessity to their commercial and industrial expansion and to their protection and prosperity.

"The inestimable value of this comparatively new science was demonstrated during the World war, and no one will deny that it must play an even larger part in any future controversy between nations—whether on land or on the sea.

"Since the termination of the World war much



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progress has been made and rapid strides have been taken in the development of this science. Many foreign nations, cognizant of the necessity and importance of aircraft, have initiated military programs and programs of mail and passenger transportation in the air far superior to the present policy of our government, and have done much to encourage the general development of aeronautics through governmental aid to commercial industry. Great Britain particularly, very soon after the war, reached the conclusion that the dominance of the air is at least of equal importance with that of the seas and set about to plan a definite policy of aerial development and the co-ordination of her aircraft activities, leading to the establishment of a separate ministry of air, which has taken the lead in practically every phase of aerial development.

"Economic considerations as well as those of national defense demand that the United States immediately formulate a definite, comprehensive and intelligent policy for the development of every phase of aeronautics and of actively encouraging the aerial transportation industry, which is vitally essential to the future progress and prosperity of the nation. To neglect longer the establishment of an intelligent policy is inexcusable.

"Because of the absence of any well-defined sympathetic program on the part of our government since the armistice, the American aeronautical industry, built up at such great expense of money and effort during the war, is rapidly disappearing. The almost antagonistic attitude of our government toward this industry has discouraged business men, and under the circumstances they were entirely justified in withdrawing their money from this field. Ninety per cent of the aviation industry created during the war has been liquidated, and unless a more sympathetic and definite policy of co-operation is established without delay, it is inevitable that the remaining 10 per cent will also disappear. The future development of aerial navigation generally is in no way limited to military and naval functions, and the closest possible co-operation must at all times exist between the aeronautic agencies of the government and the commercial industry engaged in the production and development of aircraft.

"In July, 1919, an American aviation mission, which was formed at the instance of the then secretary of war to investigate and study all forms of organization, production and development of this science, submitted a report to the secretary of war outlining the results of their investigations. This report presents the results of the only aviation investigation ever made for the United States government. The findings of this commission were extremely unpopular with old army and navy officers, and the conclusions and recommendations as incorporated in these findings are apparently being entirely ignored by the present as they were by the past administration. They are frowned upon by the general staffs of both army and navy, in spite of the fact that they are even more sound today than in 1919, when the report was made. The report was in part as follows:

"As a result of our studies, your mission desires to emphasize the universal opinion of its members that immediate action is necessary to safeguard the air interests of the United States, to preserve for the government some benefit of the great aviation expenditures made during the period of the war, and to prevent a vitally necessary industry from entirely disappearing.

"That we of today are conceivably no more qualified to judge as to the scale and development of the air-

craft of ten years hence than were we of even five years ago able to foretell the achievements of today. We must bear in mind always that for every one mind focused upon things aeronautical in this earlier period, some thousands of keen minds are now versed in aeronautics. With proper governmental encouragement, rapid progress seems inevitable.

"The principal recommendations made by this commission, none of which have been adopted, and which were discredited rather than discouraged, were the establishment of a department of air, with a cabinet officer at its head equal in importance and in representation with the Departments of War, Navy and of Commerce; the establishment of governmental institutions of education and training, including an air academy, all open alike under proper restriction to military, civilian and naval personnel, and the adoption of a system of circulating army, navy and civil personnel through the national air service.

"Is not the time at hand to demand that an efficient, intelligent and definite policy be formulated and carried out?

"Those who have studied this matter thoroughly and fairly are of the opinion that this will be impossible as long as our present policy of distributing our air activities among several governmental departments is tolerated, and it is necessary that we have a reorganization of our national defense agencies if our future as an air power is not to be entirely eclipsed by other nations.

"The indifference of our government and the manner in which aviation is being discouraged and our aviation personnel demoralized may be appreciated from what has recently been brought to light in the navy.

"As has been stated in the findings and recommendations of the aviation commission, heretofore referred to, any future war will inevitably open with great aerial activity on both sides. Lying as we are between two oceans, our first steps in war will be over the sea. Early in the war the disadvantages of having our Army Air Service as part of the Signal corps were recognized, and it was made a distinct and separate service of the army. As a result our Army Air Service is more efficient than it ever could have been otherwise as part of the army. If we are to uphold our defense over the sea we must have an air navy. Our naval aviation service must be rounded out into a distinct and separate corps, and then combined with our Army Air Service and our bureau of civil aeronautics into a great, efficient and well-balanced national air service.

"What we need now is the consolidation of our War and Navy departments into a single Department of National Defense, with a Secretary for National Defense as its head and an undersecretary for army, an undersecretary for navy and an undersecretary for air. The underdepartment for air should have, in addition to the undersecretary for air at its head, three subadministrative officers: an assistant secretary for army air, an assistant secretary for naval air and an assistant secretary for civil air.

"Such an organization would not only foster greater economy and co-operation between our present army and navy, but would create a great, efficient and well-balanced national air service.

"Such a service would carry with it a morale and a spirit equal to that of our much-admired Marine corps. It would facilitate the establishment of schools of strategy and tactics of the air and of well-directed study of the science of aeronautical engineering. It would give the personnel an opportunity to devote their attention to the promotion of the development of aeronautics. It would retain all experienced aviators in the service. It would bring our present more or less disorganized and dissatisfied navy and army aviation into a well-organized, efficient and valuable unit of our armed forces.

"The handwriting on the wall must be seen and action must be taken. Our future in the air must be governed and guided not by the selfish desires of the advocates of the old school but by the requirements of the defense and preservation of our national integrity."



SOAPSUDS

"Well, well," said Susy Soapsud, "so you're here, too, Sammy."

"Sure," said Sammy Soapsud, "I wouldn't miss a Soapsud reunion for anything."

"What's a Soapsud reunion?" asked Susy.

"A reunion of the Soapsud family," said Sammy.

"But I don't know what reunion means," said Susy.

"I was always so bright and frothy without having to go to school that Mamma Soapsud said it wasn't worth her good soapsud money to send me."

"Well, I didn't go to school myself," said Sammy, "unless you can say that I went to school in the washbub and learned my lessons from Prof. Dirty Clothes and Teacher Spots."

"But I have heard the word reunion and so I use it. A family reunion, Susy, means a joining together of the different members of the family."

"Sewing up the Soapsuds?" asked Susy.

"Oh no, oh no," said Sammy. "A Soapsud family reunion means that all the Soapsud families have come together for a time for a little chat and splash and some fluffy, frothy fun."

"So this is a Soapsud family reunion," repeated Susy; "well, I'm glad I know."

"Now I must get about and meet all the cousins and relatives," said Sammy.

"And so must I," said Susy. "I want to play some nice games."

"The game of 'sailing in the washbub without being blown' is a good one," said Sammy.

"It is, indeed," said Susy. "I think I'll play that one and get some others to join the fun."

So Susy got up some soapsud games and the Soapsud children joined her in the fun.

Sammy went about visiting his friends and relatives.

"Why, hello, Solomon Soapsud; how are you?"

"Well," said Solomon.

"What are you doing this fine day?" said Sammy.

"Sitting on the cuff of this shirt for the time being. Soon I will help do a little work on it."

"Dear me," Solomon continued, "how very soiled the cuffs of shirts do become!"

"Gentlemen must simply go about and say to the Dust Brothers and those other creatures:

"Come along, Dust Brothers, bring your cousins and your friends and play on our cuffs. We don't care for our cuffs. Come and play on them!"

"And come and have some good races."

"I do believe that is what gentlemen do," said Solomon.

"Perhaps," said Sammy, "one can never tell."

Then Sammy noticed his friend Sheffield Soapsud.

Sheffield was rather a dressy young Soapsud and wore gleaming jewels which shone through his soapsud suit.

"Hello, Sheffield," said Sammy.

"How are you this fine soapy day?"

"Splendid," said Sheffield. "I've been enjoying some good soapy dives."

"I'm fond of sports, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Sammy.

"Well," continued Sheffield, "I hear there are going to be some Soap Bubble parties today. The children in the house are going to have one party anyway, perhaps more."

"Good," said Sammy. "I'm glad to hear it. I should think they would enjoy a Soap Bubble party more than anything. With my fondness for soap I know I would."

"And they'll need members of our family in order to make their bubbles."

"Our family do their part to make fun and froth and frolics!"

"They certainly do," said Sheffield Soapsud with a proud shake of his soapy head.

"Well," said Sammy, "I must have a word with Sidney Soapsud. You'll excuse me for the moment, Sheffield?"

"Certainly, certainly," said Sheffield.

"Hello, Sidney," said Sammy, "and how are you?"

"Fine, fine," said Sidney. "Some of us have been having an argument with a dress. We showed the dress that our cleanly way was the right way. Yes, we won the argument. But for a time it did seem as though we couldn't do a thing with that dress."

"Hello, Sheffield."

"Hello, Sidney."

"Fine, fine," said Sidney. "Some of us have been having an argument with a dress. We showed the dress that our cleanly way was the right way. Yes, we won the argument. But for a time it did seem as though we couldn't do a thing with that dress."

"Hello, Sheffield."

ALWAYS TIRED NO AMBITION

Nervous and Dizzy, Everything Seemed to Worry Me. How I Got Well



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"Gee, gosh," said Bobby, "I wouldn't sell his tail for that."

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