

Strong Merchant Marine Advocated By Officials

Shipping Board's Report Declares United States
Must Maintain Her Place Among Com-
mercial Nations of World

WASHINGTON (By the Associated Press)—A "strong reaffirmation" by congress that the United States is determined to maintain permanently a merchant marine commensurate with the needs of the country from the standpoint of commerce and national defense, was recommended in the annual report of the shipping board.

Such a declaration of policy was declared by the board to be desirable despite improvements in the American shipping situation brought about during the past year by route consolidations, stabilization of rates, and other measures.

The board also recommended that a joint committee be created composed of representatives of the board and the Interstate Commerce Commission, to coordinate rail and water transportation; prohibition by law of preferential arrangements between American railroads and foreign shipping lines; and exemption from taxation of all earnings from American shipping in foreign trade. The report did not go into detail, however, regarding any of these recommendations.

Accomplishments Named

Discussing the accomplishments of the year, the board declared that recently effected consolidations of general ocean trade routes involving decreases in the number of government freight and passenger ships and in the number of operating agents, were said in the report to have reduced overlapping and duplicate services and to have cut expenses, making it possible at the same time to obtain a greater flexibility with the tonnage in service.

An examination of 1921 freight and passenger tariffs filed during the year led to a conclusion by the board that there has been a "general stabilization in the rates, fares and charges of common carriers by water in interstate commerce." Inaugurated last June of a system for training inexperienced American-born boys who seek employment on ships had "assisted tremendously in the board's policy of Americanization" of crews on government vessels, the report declared. During the year 532 officers and 84,227 unlicensed men were placed on American vessels, and of these totals, the board pointed out, 75.5 per cent were American citizens. This, however, was a decrease in total placements of 17,290 men from the year 1923, and also a decrease of 5.9 per cent in the percentage of Americans employed. The reduction was attributed to the lower average number of American vessels in active service during the year, and the decline in the percentage of competent Americans available for sea service was said to have been due principally to improved economic conditions ashore.

Successors Needed.

"Another important factor," the report continued, "was the lack of a suitable rating in the vessel's crew which could be filled with inexperienced young Americans to eventually replace those leaving the sea for various reasons." "The door has been opened to American boys who have no sea training by substituting two American-born deck boys for one ordinary seaman at a nominal wage and without material increase in operating cost. No report of actual results is available for the fiscal year, but it can be said that it will assist tremendously in the board's policy of Americanization."

In a discussion of Section 25 of the Merchant Marine Act, designed to afford preferential railroad rates on cargoes to be shipped in American vessels, but which was suspended, the board asserted that application of the section would have given American ships the advantage of the patronage of exporters and importers in preference to their patronage of foreign tonnage.

Recommendations

The board's list of recommendations follow in full: "Codification of the navigation laws should be pushed to an early conclusion and the necessary steps taken to simplify them and remove any conflict. "The United States should pay a Naval Reserve retainer to Amer-

ican citizens during such times as they are serving on board American ships engaged in foreign trade, such retainer to be conditioned upon their being willing to serve in the naval forces in time of war. "All earnings from American shipping in foreign trade and all profits derived from the sale of American vessels, should be exempt from taxation, provided the amount of tax exempted is expended in new vessels constructed in American shipyards. "All transportation of an official nature which is paid for by the government, whether of property of person, should be done by American vessels, unless the exigencies of the public service clearly require otherwise. The military departments especially should secure as much as possible to their transportation from the commercial marine, and they should be authorized to contract for a period up to 10 years for such transportation, in order that private owners might embark upon the construction of vessels especially for such transportation.

"In the carriage of mails the Appropriation Subcommittee having to do with the Post Office Department should hear representatives of the United States Shipping board, and should make appropriations with a view to covering subsidies sufficient to create and to maintain in a few principal lines the uneconomic but highly desirable type of fast passenger-carrying vessels. "A joint transportation body composed of representatives of the Interstate Commerce Commission and the United States Shipping Board should be authorized to coordinate all activities involving through transportation by both rail and water. Preferential arrangements and contracts between American railroads and foreign lines should be prohibited by law.

"Conferences and agreements between carriers themselves and between carriers and shippers which look to the stabilization of rates and the provision of an improved and adequate service should be encouraged. "A strong reaffirmation of policy should be made by the congress to the effect that the United States is determined, either publicly or privately, to maintain permanently a merchant marine commensurate with the needs of the country from the standpoint of commerce and national defense, and that strategic trade routes will not under any circumstances be abandoned.

"Encourage the adoption internationally of a uniform system of measurement of vessels. Work with all recognized bodies toward the simplification and standardization of shipping documents such as charter parties and bills of lading. Simplify as much as possible the paper work required by United States laws in connection with the entry and clearance of American vessels in American ports."

The National Press club, which is the focus point for the announcements, is unable to gauge their number. Organizations that send them in must be authentic, but otherwise, the Press club says, no tab is kept.

Practically all the government departments resort to this system to keep the public officially informed. Even the White House

He's Worth Watching



THE WORLD IS EVER AWAITING some new horticultural marvel from the Santa Rosa (Calif.) garden of Luther Burbank. It may be safely assumed that the man who made cactus grow without thorns will again startle civilization with some new change in nature's course.

Little Real News in Formal Press Notices

WASHINGTON (AP)—Newspaper correspondents in Washington usually are subjected to an avalanche of "handouts" as they affectionately term the formal press releases that come from organizations innumerable.

With the recent political campaign in full swing, headquarters of the major parties kept their typewriters and mimeographs busy turning out copy that appreciably

increased the flow of free information.

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GERMAN CITY TO APPLY SURPLUS TO LOWER TAXES

AUGSBURG (AP)—This old city, once the scene for the coronation of German emperors, can boast of being one of the few German towns that are running without a deficit. The city treasurer has announced that for 1924 there will be a surplus of more than 2,000,000 gold marks in the treasury.

The city is so confident of being able to keep up its record that the

aldermen have voted to use the surplus for reducing taxes—this in the face of the fact that the council has authorized an ambitious program of street railway extension, building of a new city hospital and of a municipal market, and erection of an electric power plant.

One of the first taxes to be removed is that on beer. Augsburg is one of the chief cities of Bavaria, where popular parlance has it that children are raised on beer instead of milk. The removal of the local duty on beer is therefore likely to win many votes for aldermen politicians.

The price of gas is to be reduced

considerably, and workers' monthly tickets on the municipally owned street railway are to be offered 30 per cent cheaper. Local taxes on real estate and business turnover are also to be lowered.

WEATHER BIT FREAKISH

HOOD RIVER, Ore. (Special)—Freakish winter weather marked the first December day over the mid-Columbia. While a sleet storm prevailed at Hood River, with the temperature slightly above freezing, a heavy rain fell at Parkdale, although mercury there stood at 27 degrees.

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