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STARTLING EXPOSURES ARE RESULT OF PROBE

Illinois Representative in Speech Gives Review of Disclosures.

Speaking in the House of Representatives in October 13th, Representative Graham, of Illinois, chairman of the house special committee in investigation of Expenditures in the War Department, sketched conditions as they were found by the committee at the government powder plant at Nitro, W. Va., where \$75,000,000 was spent in construction and equipment with practically no production of powder.

William J. Graham said: During the course of the great war the United States government obtained and collected in various ways large amounts of property, both real and personal, in this country and in Europe. Since the signing of the armistice steps have been taken, as you all know, to try to dispose of some of this property. At present our government, through its War department, is disposing of some of this material at various times. The Select Committee on Expenditures in the War Department, in making some of its investigations, has had its attention directed through the public press to a proposed sale of property belonging to the government and located near Charleston, W. Va., at what is commonly called the Nitro powder plant. Finding that it was about to be sold, the subcommittee on ordinance went out there and took some testimony to disclose the facts relative to the conditions existing there, what property we had, and about what Congress ought to do about the situation, if anything.

The sale of that property is under the control of the Director of Sales. While, primarily the ordinance branch of the war department has control over it, it is being managed by the Director of Sales. At this time this sale has not been concluded, and is pending and undisposed of. The facts relative to the whole surrounding circumstances are such as to induce in the minds of our subcommittee, in which our entire committee concurred, the idea that we ought to present these facts in a brief way to the members of this House, and indirectly to the people, so that they might be advised about them and so that, perhaps, if necessary, some steps in legislation might be taken that might help in the general disposition of this property. I will not have time in the short time allotted to me to go into the details of this, but can only touch the high spots as I go along.

The Powder Investigation.

The powder program in 1917 was investigated by a commission that went to Europe to determine what we ought to do in making powder. Up to that time we had not made any, except in the Picatinny Arsenal and in private concerns. In 1917 we set this Franco-American commission to Europe to find out something as to what we ought to do about manufacturing powder. When the commission reported back, immediate steps were taken to try to increase the powder production in this country. When the European war began the total production of powder in the United States was about one million and a half pounds a month. When we went into the war it was risen to a million and a half pounds a day. The production therefore, when we went into the war was about as I have stated, but we agreed to increase the amount a million and a half pounds a day by manufacturing it in government plants, and in carrying out that intention they proposed two government owned plants, one at Nitro, W. Va., and the other at Nashville, Tenn., called "Old Hickory." The Old Hickory plant was to produce 900,000 pounds and the Nitro plant 625,000 pounds a day, so you can tell something about the immensity of this program that the government was about to embark upon.

The construction of these two plants cost, as nearly as your committee can ascertain, \$90,000,000 at Old Hickory, Nashville, and \$60,000,000 at Nitro, W. Va., or approximately \$150,000,000 has been expended on the two plants for construction cost up to this time. This does not include operating costs, nothing except the building and construction of the two plants.

More to Come on the Subject.

I am going to make one further suggestion. The President should not only urge more work and more rigid economy but as the recognized head of the nation, should set a whole-some example for the country. I shall not criticize him for failure to work for everybody knows that nothing is quite so tiresome or wearing as continuous travel. I do think, however, the President has much to learn about economy. As someone said at the other end of the Capitol the other day, he has been "spending money like a drunken sailor." He has disregarded every economy in the expenditure of money. He has cavorted around with royalty and with the representatives of monarchs and spent more money in his travels through the country and about the

world than has ever before been expended by any monarch since the beginning of civilization. His expenses at the peace conference will aggregate more than all the expenses put together of all the representatives of this government at similar conferences since the beginning of the nation. It will be a shock to the country to know just what it cost to take those sixteen hundred advisers to Europe, whose advice was never accepted. It will be interesting to know just what it cost the people to put a glass roof on the George Washington in order that the presidential party might bask in the sunshine at sea. It will be interesting at least to know what it cost to take the musicians out of the fashionable Baltimore Hotel of New York City to play while the President ate the food prepared by the hands of sixteen special chefs. The country is anxious to know what it cost to send a special ship in advance to Europe with automobiles to meet the president upon his arrival. Economy, like charity, should begin at home and the President should point the way for the nation.

Representative Green, of Massachusetts, chairman of the House Marine Committee, urges speedy action by Congress in freeing American shipping from war time restrictions and enabling it to compete with the great ocean-carrying nations. He says it is necessary if the United States is to take its place as one of the great maritime nations. He says: "The United States has a wonderful opportunity before it. Shall we or shall we not grasp the marvelous opportunities we now have to extend our trade throughout the world? This opportunity will not wait. Already we have lost valuable time; we have lost ground we may not easily recover. We must move swiftly if we are to take the place in the world's markets which some of our leading industrial competitors have been forced to abandon. If we do it now we can establish ourselves so firmly that we cannot be dislodged upon the return of peace. If we act intelligently and with cooperation, so as to produce ships cheaply and rapidly, we will not only produce ships to enable us to become the leaders in the commerce of the world by furnishing transportation at reasonable rates, therefore performing a service to the rest of the world, but we shall build ships in such large numbers and at such fair prices that we will become the mecca of the shipbuilding trade of the world."

Representative Everett Sanders, of Indiana, in a recent speech in the House, called attention to the fact that when English ships pass through the Panama canal, they are measured by the American governmental authorities under what are known as the English rules, while American ships are measured under the American rules. As a result a British ship pays \$1,462 less than an American ship of the same tonnage, although under the American rules she would have paid \$24 more. First Congress, at the demand of President Wilson, for reasons he mysteriously hinted at, but has never given, put American vessels on the same tolls basis as British vessels. Now the administration through a strained construction of the law, so regulates the tolls that the American vessel is discriminated against.

Dubuque (La.) Times-Journal says: "The conflict between nation and nation has not ceased. It has only been transferred to another field. Victory will come to the people who can combine willingness to work with an increased production of marketable goods. Every day brings this news from the fields of battle. About half of the workers of England are out on strikes. Production has been cut as never before. In the United States we have about two thousand strikes. Production is decreased, the price of the goods manufactured is so high that they cannot find an export market. In Germany about one hundred per cent of the workers are at work. Production is increased. Their goods are cheap enough to find a ready market for the export trade. The new war has just begun. May we hope that American industry will do its part as loyally as did the military forces of the republic."

Dr. E. E. Pratt, former chief of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce, said the other day in New York that the financial position of the United States is weak because of our loans to Europe, and that the low rate of foreign exchange indicates a failure of American banks to meet a financial situation. He criticizes the administration for overlooking the trade opportunities created since the armistice, stating that the British trade through Coignae was greater in the two months of July and August, 1919, than it was in the year preceding the war. "No greater error was made by our government than its almost complete neglect of our trade and foreign interests during the war," he said. "Great Britain never for a moment lost sight of the commercial advantages of the situation. The question now is, will anyone in Washington take a real interest in business, particularly in the business problems involved in trade with Central Europe. The outlook is very barren."

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