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• ARMING THE U.S.A. •

President to Ask \$5,000,000,000 To Complete the Defense Blueprint

Staff Correspondence

WASHINGTON, July 4.—For nineteen years the United States Army and Navy have been working on elaborate war and defense plans. For one year they have been revising those plans, but lately they have been falling behind the President and Congress.

Now the Advisory Defense Commission and the services have about caught up. They've nearly completed a single, comprehensive and detailed blueprint for American defense. To fulfill the provisions the President plans to send Congress one more defense message asking for another \$5,000,000,000. After that, with machine industries saturated with orders, Congress can sit back and survey the defense picture—provided England doesn't collapse overnight.

The Navy:

Acting Secretary of the Navy Compton announced yesterday the award of contracts for three aircraft carriers and two cruisers to the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. Orders for the last three weeks total 92 ships, to cost \$1,140,000,000; two battleships, four aircraft carriers, 15 cruisers, 38 destroyers, 28 submarines, four auxiliaries and one minesweeper. Yesterday's contracts complete the orders for the 11 per cent fleet expansion appropriated for last spring. The Senate Naval Affairs Committee approved a bill to authorize construction of 200 more ships, to cost \$4,000,000,000, but no money for them is expected this year.

The Navy has also started construction of a new aviation training base at Corpus Christi, Texas, and is planning two more, at Miami and Jacksonville, Fla. With its single training station at Pensacola, Fla., the Navy expects to add this year 850 pilots to the force of 3000. By July, 1942, there will be 6800 Navy pilots and at least 6000 will be trained annually thereafter. Since May 10 orders have been placed for between 900 and 1200 Navy planes; about 1200 new Navy planes will be delivered before the end of the calendar year.

The enlisted strength of the Navy is now being increased at the rate of 4500 men a month to reach an authorized 170,000.

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The Army:

The Army didn't get its new appropriations until the first of this week and has had little time to place any large orders except one yesterday for \$1,488,272 worth of airplane engines for new flying fortresses.

The airplane-procurement program of the Army under the comprehensive plan will be tailored to fit the expanded pilot-training program of the Air Corps. Three new training centers are being established to supplement Randolph Field, Texas, and by next year planes will be needed to accommodate 7000 additional pilots annually.

As fast as it can get the equipment the Army is planning to outfit an armored corps of two divisions of mechanized cavalry, motorized infantry and mobile field artillery. The new corps will eventually contain 1400 tanks, combat and scout cars, 600 mobile guns and howitzers. More armored units will be set up as soon as tanks, trucks and artillery can be manufactured.

Vocational Training:

A \$16,000,000 program to train 150,000 to 250,000 workers for defense industries is being sponsored jointly by Advisory Defense Commissioner Sidney Hillman and the U. S. Office of Education. Courses will be conducted in the 1000-odd public trade and vocational schools already in existence but operating at only about two-fifths of capacity. Fifty thousand workers will be taken from WPA rolls and paid WPA wages while studying. Most of the rest will be employed persons chosen by state and federal government employment services.

The Defense Commission:

The biggest single feather in the commission's month-old hat is its negotiation of a contract with the Packard Motor Co. to manufacture the 9000 Rolls Royce aircraft engines which the Ford company refused to make. Only 3000 of the engines are for the United States, the rest for Great Britain.

The seven members of the defense commission have been working overtime organizing their offices, hiring a list of employes that reads like *Poor's Directory of Corporation Directors* and consulting with the Army, Navy and President on the blueprint for American defense.

Special policy committees have been established in all important industries and branches of labor. And the commission has passed on more than half a billion dollars worth of orders, mostly for the Navy Department.—D. L.

PM