

Pathfinder

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Faster mobilizing, for 'greatest danger'

A grim-faced group of legislators left the conference with the President last Friday. One of them, Representative Charles A. Eaton (R.-N.J.), said solemnly:

"We face the greatest danger of extinction since the nation was founded."

That afternoon, in Congress, they formally heard President Truman ask \$16.8 billion more for defense and another \$1 billion in atomic funds. An hour and a half later committees were at work to push through the necessary legislation. On the surface, at least, there was a unanimous determination to meet the sharp speed-up in mobilization which the President called "a great urgency."

Expensive Hardware. The request included \$9.2 billion for the Army, \$4.6 billion for the Air Force, and \$2.9 billion for the Navy. Nearly half the total would go for "hardware"—ships, tanks, planes and guns.

On the heels of the supplementary bill—boosting defense spending for the first half of this fiscal year to \$41.8 billion—came an Army call for 50,000 more draftees in February. At the same time the Air Force lowered mental and physical standards for volunteers and the Navy eased its enlistment requirements. The nation was racing toward a strength of 3 million men in uniform by June.

There was a bit of worry over the impact of taxes and controls. But there seemed to be little realization that asking for money isn't sowing dragon's teeth which magically pop men and equipment up out of the battleground. The time running out in Korea wouldn't wait for factory pipelines to fill with defense orders and a rebuilding Army to train its men. Warned Gen. Douglas MacArthur: "Failure to meet the issue [in Korea] will leave it to be fought, and possibly lost, on the battlefields of Europe."