

**SECRETARY OF WAR BAKER MAKES TELLING REPLY TO HIS CRITICS BEFORE SENATE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.**

**Half Million Men in France Soon and One Million Will Follow—They Will Go as Quickly as Ships Are Available—Baker Answers That War Machine Had Broken Down—Chamberlain Admits That Baker Made Profound Impression.**

America will have an army of half million men in France early this year with a million more trained and equipped ready to follow as quickly as ships can be provided to carry them and the outlook for this is not unpromising.

Secretary Baker gave this information to the nation and to the world Monday last in a statement before the Senate Military Committee, baring much that until now has been carefully guarded with the army's military secrets in answering charges that the Government broken down preparing for war.

**MANY CONGRESSMEN HEAR HIM.**

From early morning until late afternoon the Secretary addressed the committee and a crowd including many members of both houses of Congress gathered in a big hearing room of the Senate office building. He spoke extemporaneously beginning with details of the mammoth task of building an army of a million and a half, answering such complaints of inefficiency as were cited by Senator Chamberlain in his recent speech and declaring that such instances were isolated and not general. Some questions were asked, and Mr. Baker from time to time had assistants go to the telephone for reports on specific questions.

**DRAMATIC GENERAL STATEMENT.**

Then, toward the close of the day the Secretary delivered a dramatic general statement on the American war plan, telling of the coming of the allied missions, of the day and night conferences with men from the scene of battle in which the plans now being executed were adopted, and of success beyond the most sanguine expectations in building the army and its industrial support at home, transporting men across the ocean, constructing railroads in France and preparing to strike the enemy with every resource at the country's demand.

**"PROFOUND IMPRESSION" SAID HIS MAIN CRITIC.**

When Mr. Baker closed, it was apparent he had created a profound impression. Chairman Chamberlain said so before he left the stand. There was no attempt at cross examination. The chairman proposed that the Secretary be given a rest, and it virtually was agreed to recall him for further examination later after the committee has completed its hearing of officers of the medical corps, aviation section and other branches of the service.

**SENATE COMMITTEE AMAZED.**

While many things disclosed impressed, the committee was frankly amazed when told that the men of thirty-two National Guard and National army divisional camps are ready to go today at need. When members wanted to know why such things had not been given publicity before, Mr. Baker spoke the reluctance of military men to reveal their war plans and quoted German remarks about America's advertisement of her preparations.

Emphasizing that he was not there to defend himself or anybody else the Secretary urged the committee again and again to lay bare any short coming or failure of the department that it might be corrected. Frequently he paused to seek stronger language to describe the devotion of his associates in the department, military and civilian.

"For one reason or another," he said, "the impression has gone out into the country, to some extent at least, that the War Department has fallen down."

**NO SUCH TRAGICAL THING AS THIS.**

"It would be a tragical thing if this tremendous effort, this wholly unprecedented sacrifice made by men, were in fact to turn out to deserve the comment that it had fallen down."

Never in the history of time, he declared, had an army of its size been raised, equipped, trained and prepared for battle as had that of the United States.

**"TO THE LAST SHOE BUTTON."**

Mr. Baker took personal responsibility for getting men under training before their equipment was ready "to the last button." Such officers as Major General Leonard Wood, he said, had urged this policy. He described conferences that evolved the ordnance program and its fulfillment, submitting documents to prove that France and Great Britain were supplying artillery and machine guns for the first forces at their own urgent request in order that ships might be used for other purposes.

**PERSHING CONSULTED AND HE APPROVED**

In all that was done prior to the departure of the first troops, General Pershing shared in the deliberations and approved the decisions reached, Mr. Baker said, and now surrounded with a staff of trained regular officers who could well be spared from the great task at home. "Pershing is in France as the eyes of the army." Every step taken since has been founded on his long daily cable reports of what is going on at the fighting fronts.

**OVERCROWDING IN CAMPS EXPLAINED.**

Tables were cited to show that overcrowding in the camps and cantonments had not been general and that the sickness had come mostly in the camps, where medical opinion had agreed it was least to be expected. The history of the development and building of the cantonments was given in detail to show that every precaution possible had been taken.

**NEW WEAPONS THIS WAR CALLED FOR.**

Analyzing the efforts of the Ordnance Bureau, the Secretary said that General Crozier had urged for years a greater artillery preparation; that he at least had realized the time gun making required. But even France herself "with the enemy at her throat," he added, had not been able to see what vast gun programs the war would lead into.

During his general statement of the war plan and how it was developed, Mr. Baker was rarely interrupted.

**THE RESERVES TO THE COLORS.****(A CALL BY THE GOVERNOR.)**

On the 3rd day of September, 1917, I issued a proclamation calling into active military service all men between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five. These men constitute the Home Guard and are the guardians of the peace and safety of the State.

I now call to the Colors all the women of the State, and all the boys and girls between the ages of twelve and twenty-one.

The one supreme task before the American people is the winning of the war.

The one supreme necessity for the winning of the war is food.

The one sure way to supply this supreme necessity is to man the bread line with the woman power, the boy power and the girl power of the State.

I hereby nominate and appoint every woman in the State a committee of one on Garden Spots. The duty of each committee is two-fold:

1. To take steps at once to prepare and cultivate a garden spot for herself and family.

2. To see to it that every vacant parcel of land in the neighborhood in which she lives is converted into a garden spot.

I urge every woman in the State to join some active canning and drying club to the end that everything may be saved and nothing lost. Last year the women canned and dried eighteen times as much fruit and vegetables as they did the year before. This is a glorious record. Double it.

I call to the Colors every boy and girl between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. I urge every one of you to join the Corn, the Pig and the Poultry Clubs. In so doing you will become an essential part of the army that must win the war.

Today we have only thirty-six hundred Corn Club boys. I want to see one hundred thousand marshalled in invincible array. Let no boy be a slacker, but every one fall promptly in line.

If these reserves shall hearken to this call we will surely win the war and the victory so achieved will count as much for happiness in the coming years as it will count for success in this supreme crisis in the world struggle for enduring peace.

January 24th, 1918.

T. W. BICKETT, Governor.

Senator Overman has received information that the French Government desires to decorate the monument at Carthage to James McConnell, the North Carolina aviator who was killed in France after having established a record of unusual accomplishment. McConnell's father will be formally notified of the request and this handsome recognition on the part of the French Government will be of deep appreciation by the people of North Carolina. This French tribute in bronze will always be pointed to as evidence of the great heart of the French people.

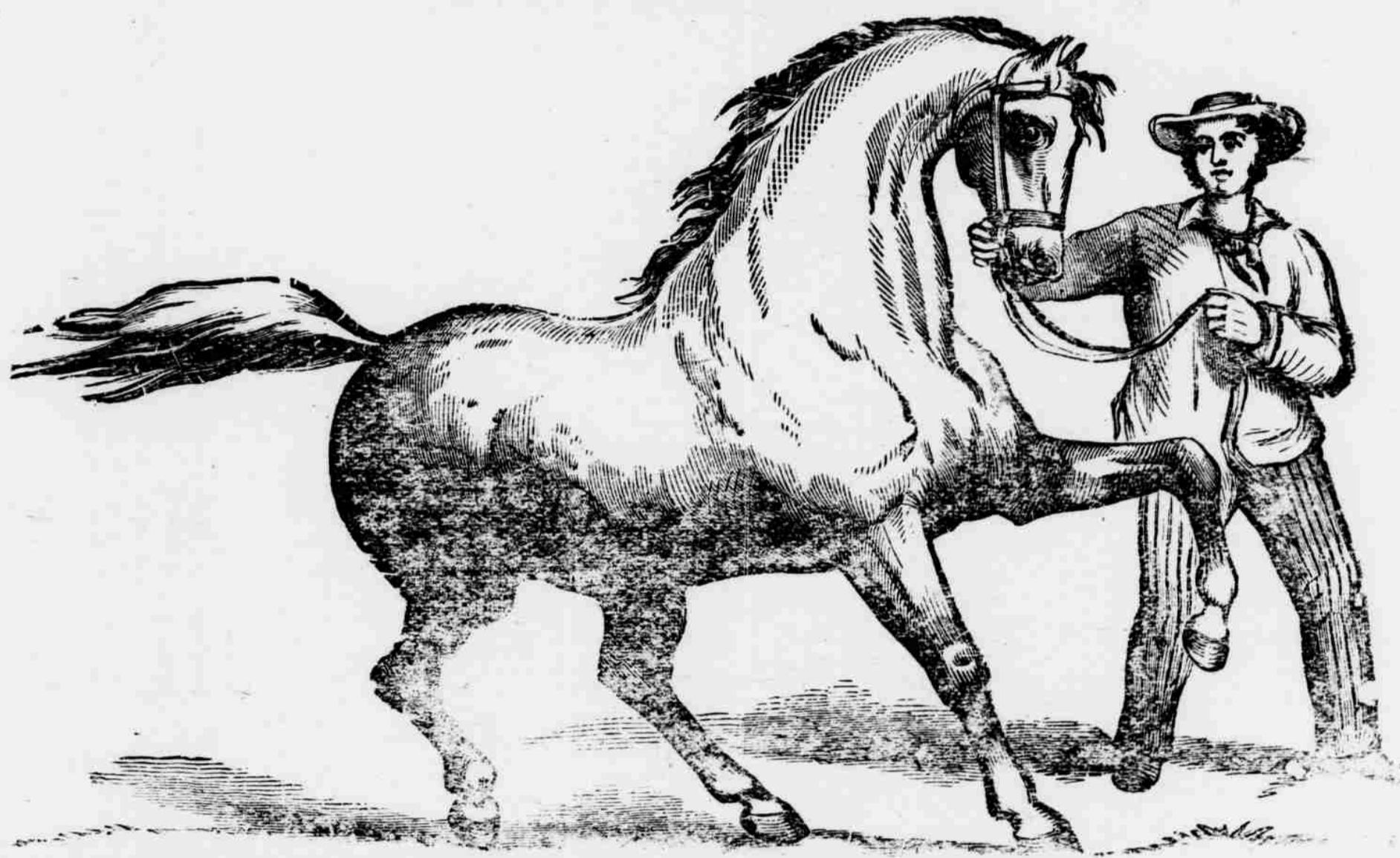
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