

Looking at WASHINGTON

ELECTION BATTLE BEGINS IN ENGLAND

The election campaign in Great Britain is moving toward the decisive day, February 23rd, when the voters of that country go to the polls to determine whether the present Labor Government will be returned to office or replaced by the Conservatives, led by the great war leader, Winston Churchill.

The parties have set out their platforms, using all the sugary bait that political parties are accustomed to set before the unsuspecting citizen. We make this statement on the assumption that British politicians are like those on this side of the Atlantic and that the purpose of the platforms is to catch votes.

The Labor Government, as most of our readers know, has nationalized the coal industry, railways, canals, docks, airways, gas and electricity, the cable and wireless and the Bank of England. It has proposed to nationalize the iron and steel industry, but this has been deferred until after the day of the election.

The Conservative platform gives a pledge to stop nationalization, including that of iron and steel, to put some road transport back into private industry, decentralize the coal and railway administrations and determine the fate of the gas and electricity industries after greater experience in the present operation.

Interestingly, the Conservatives, in their political manifesto, suggest that everyone should be able to own a home of his own, asserting that a five per cent deposit in cash should be sufficient for the purchase of a house. In brief, it promises a cheaper welfare state and more freedom, but it does not undertake to undo much of the nationalization already effected by the Labor Government.

We have no way of acquiring the information necessary upon which to base a prediction as to the outcome of the British elections. One newspaper correspondent, who recently visited England and in whose judgment we have some confidence, was the opinion some months ago that the Labor Government would be returned to power. Whether this happens to be correct or not, it is virtually impossible to identify the British parties with those of the United States and it would be a mistake to assume that the Conservatives correspond to our Republicans and that the Labor Government corresponds to our Democratic administration.

LET'S HAVE A THREE-WAY DEFENSE

The controversy over air power has produced much discussion, with many asserting that the way to defend this country is through the creation of a super-air force, capable of winning the next war by quick and decisive

strikes, far from home bases.

There are critics of this "easy victory" program. One of them, Marshall Andrews, in a recent book, "Diastaser Through Air Power," declares that the airplane is a weapon—a powerful weapon, vital to the success of any army or navy, but no successful war can be fought under a concept built around a single weapon instead of a balanced military organization.

The author takes a look at the assertion, commonly heard, that strategic bombing can break the enemy and force a plea for peace, saying that, in the last war, we spent fifty billion dollars to prove that strategic bombing permitted enemy production to increase, hardened enemy morale into fierce resistance and, finally, the infantry had to fight its way through the rubble bomb-plastered cities to defeat the enemy.

We are not professional soldiers enough to assert that any one school of thought is correct in connection with the squabble over the nation's strategy in the next war. We are suspicious enough, however, to question any assertion that the defense of this country can be safely left to either of the three great services—the air force, the army or the navy.

As we have pointed out repeatedly in past articles, the United States is rich enough to afford a three-fold defense. Let the three services each develop its strategy and tactics and its own weapons and then, if an emergency comes, the full resources of the nation can be thrown behind the organization which has the tools for the job at hand.

To risk all our future upon any one pet theory would be foolish. If it is right, which no one can assert positively today, we might be safe. If it is wrong, and we have no alternative, the nation will, for the first time in its history, go down into ignominious defeat. The risk is too great to take, and the nation should not take it.

SUPER-BOMB A DEFENSE MUST
A report that some of the scientists, who helped us build the first atomic bombs, have experienced twinges of conscience and remorse over its use, can be put down as little more than the imagination of some promoters.

The United States, engaged in a great war, was faced with the threat that Germany, thoroughly staffed with competent scientists, was concentrating on the development of the atomic bomb. There was nothing else for American science to do but to get into the race because sole possession of the atomic bomb by the Nazis would have meant the destruction of Western civilization, with the loss of all its great moral and spiritual values.

Under the present circumstances, with Russian scientists admittedly in on the "secret" of the atomic bomb and believed to be pushing their pur-

suit of a super-bomb as fast as possible, there is nothing for the United States scientists to do but to accept the challenge.

We must have whatever bomb science can make available and we must have them as early, or before, any other country gets them. Certainly, we must have the super-bomb before the Communists of Russia acquire such a weapon for possible use in aggressive warfare.

ARMS TO EUROPE—SO WHAT?

Eight nations of Western Europe are soon to begin to receive arms and military equipment to the value of a billion dollars as part of the mutual defense assistance program.

Before the shipments could begin in quantity, the nations were required to sign contracts agreeing to conditions laid down by the United States. Some delay was experienced because Great Britain was especially cautious about the generality of the language and asked clarification before entering into an agreement.

The eight countries that will receive assistance are Belgium, France, Denmark, Great Britain, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway. Behind the shipments are some general agreements as to integrated defense. France, it is assumed, will bear the main burden at the beginning of ground operations. Deep-sea naval operations will be shared by the United States and Great Britain. The United States will have the burden of long-range strategic air warfare. Each nation will be responsible for its internal security and a part of the general air defense.

There are other matters to be determined, however, including the strategic plans of battle if war develops with Russia. Where will the Western nations make a stand in Europe, on the Rhine or somewhere else? How will Italy and the Scandinavian countries be defended? If this is successfully accomplished, what would be the program to bring about the defeat of Russia if that country engages in the aggressive enterprise.

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We ask these questions without implying that the military leaders of the nine nations involved have ignored them. One must assume that the questions have been studied and that competent leaders have formulated tentative plans. Failure to promulgate and publish such a strategic plan does not provide conclusive evidence that no thinking has been done on the subject and that no provisions have been made.

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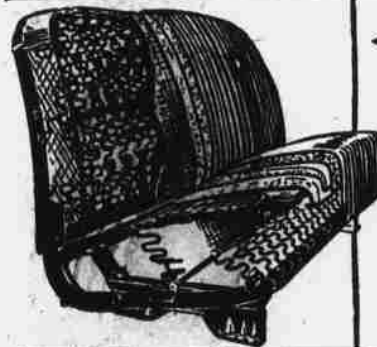
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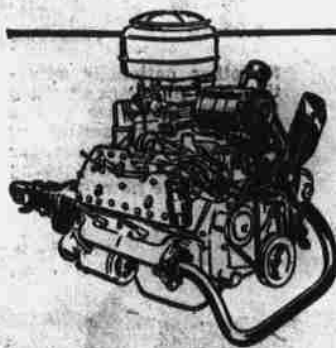


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