

Congress Shies at Huge Appropriations

SOMEWHAT more than a quarter century ago—back in 1891—a remark by Representative Reed, Speaker of the House, that although we had a billion-dollar Congress we had a billion-dollar country, became a household phrase. Today our appropriations approach ten billion dollars.

Washington, D. C., Dec., 1919.

THE second, or regular, session of the Sixty-sixth Congress convened December 1; it is unlikely that the business which will come before it will be finished before late autumn. Among the legislative measures that must be adopted are the appropriation bills for the fiscal year of 1921. The estimates presented by the departments for the fiscal year of 1921 total nearly five billion dollars. "Miscellaneous" additions, together with the deficiencies, bring the sum up to more than seven billion dollars.

The appalling amounts asked have brought most serious, most beneficial, and most startling results.

The Congress of the United States has awakened. In its awakening it has pronounced itself guilty of having permitted extravagances that never should have been permitted; also, it is going on record to end these extravagances.

The outcry of the masses, already burdened terribly by war and other taxation, has been heard—and will be answered.

The two matters of policy which the early days of this, the real reconstruction Congress, have evolved cannot help win the indorsement of the people. They are:

Retrenchment and economy of the most rigid character;

Repudiation of a giant military establishment, further to burden the people with taxation, which has been sought by a militarist faction as a result of the war.

The argument of some that the motive behind the foregoing is political—the approach of the presidential campaign—needs no discussion in the presentation of the facts.

An analysis of the estimates submitted reveals that all but two departments have requested less than for 1920—the Post Office and the Navy. The Post Office for the past year has earned a profit, and is expected to be self-sustaining, at least, in the future.

The startling figures given out are those for the War Department which seeks more than \$300,000,000 in excess of what was asked for 1920—to maintain a military establishment on a peace footing. In all, more than one billion dollars is sought by this department, and \$982,800,020 for the War Department proper, and \$117,793,330 for fortifications. These estimates present an increase, for the department proper, of \$210,475,142, and for fortifications, \$106,579,039. That is what the War Department would have us spend, more than was spent, the first year after the coming of peace. Let it be said that the War Department will never obtain the sum asked; it is doubtful whether half that amount will be appropriated; there has been far too much waste, far too many extravagances.

There can be no doubt that war brought about the expenditures of such huge sums in its prosecution that the Federal Government, the departments and Congress alike, became careless. It is admitted. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were as hundreds of millions in other years; millions, yea, hundreds of millions of dollars, were juggled on the tips of congressional tongues with an ease astonishing to those unaccustomed to think above their yearly wage. Millions were asked for this, a billion or two for this and that; the millions and billions were granted, in the name of Mars; for who would brand himself unpatriotic by questioning, during the height of battle, the uses to which these great sums would be put. Yes, that has been admitted, both on the floor of the Senate and of the House. The members faltered in their duty, with the excuse, "Oh, it's for the war."

But what a reaction has set in! For now the war is over, and not only are those who remained behind, and who subscribed to the Liberty loans, to pay for the carrying on of the war, continuing to pay for that war, but those who went over, and carried on at Chateau Thierry and the Argonne, are beginning to pay for this same war upon their return. And they, justly, don't care overmuch for that. And so, with this sentiment abroad, and making itself felt in the ever-increasing complaints that are coming in the mails of the members of Congress, it is not astonishing, is it, that these members of Congress have been tremendously influenced? And, take my word, they are—and those estimates, so nonchalantly submitted by the various departments that go to make up our government, won't be recognized by their fathers when they finally receive the vote of approval of Congress!

When Congress gets through with these estimates, it may be said that the War Department will be com-

pelled to struggle along during the year of 1921 on a sum approximating one-half of that asked; the estimates of the other departments will suffer similarly, it is believed. It has been admitted by Congress for these many months following the signing of the armistice that the departments in Washington are literally flooded with clerks, men and women, who are parasitically hanging on to their jobs, aided and abetted in the past by the same members of the same Congress, which now purposes to go through with a thorough housecleaning.

There are 40,000 too many clerks in the departments here, and at no time since peace has come has there been an appreciable decrease in the total numbers, more than one hundred thousand. Instead, it must be admitted, there has been a steady increase, and, it must be admitted, too, Congress for the most part has been responsible for both conditions. In the past, when a department has sought to cut down the numbers of clerks employed, the congressional protests that have raged about the head of that department during the subsequent twenty-four hours have been with such force and indignation that the department head has subsided—defeated. This is a fact. For instance, in the War Department, some time ago, it was proposed to cut down the clerical force, five hundred, and when that fact became known *within twenty-four hours 169 protests*, personal and by letter, had been lodged by members of both Houses of Congress. But that condition cannot and will not continue.

If there are those in either House who will attempt to permit such a condition to exist, reminders of the national election approaching and the necessity of voting on such measures without doubt will bring the needed change of heart.

As to the attempt to militarize the country, that is foredoomed to failure. Members of Congress have heard in no uncertain terms, not only what the returned soldiers themselves think of such proposals, but also what the relatives of those who fought in this war think. Also, the various military organizations that have grown out of the conflict in their conventions, have set themselves sternly against a policy that would lead to the making of a huge, permanent, peace-time military establishment. The recent national convention of the American Legion answered decisively any question there might be of the opinion of those who served.

CARTER GLASS, who has retired as Secretary of the Treasury to become United States Senator, in his annual report to Congress, advised that body to deny "every appropriation for expenditure in new fields." He pointed out that there can be no appreciable reduction of taxes during the coming fiscal year as government receipts must remain at the present figure to bring government borrowing to an end.

Excessive government expenditures are "the most vital factors in increasing the cost of living," said Mr. Glass. Also, he urged that a halt be called on furnishing too much financial help to European countries, saying, "we must not allow our sympathy to warp our judgment * * * The problem of financing Europe belongs largely to the exporter, because industries cannot be reopened without raw stocks."

Congress realizes fully the responsibility that rests upon it, how greatly the taxation makes for the unrest that exists, and already, with Congress in session but a few weeks, steps have been taken to effect great economies. Representative Good, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has, with the other leaders, decided to ask the departments first to attempt to create informally a budget that, with a revision of the estimates as submitted, will tend to make the committee work of approval easier. It has been estimated in the House, by no less a figure than the Speaker, Mr. Gillett, that the five billion dollar estimates, without any deficit resulting at the end of the fiscal year of 1920 (and that there will be a huge deficit is admitted) would require between eight and nine billion dollars of revenue. Mr. Glass is authority for the statement that the deficit for the current year will be approximately four billion dollars, and for 1921, two billions.

In the Senate the sentiment that there must be wholesale reductions in the estimates has led to open expression, even debate, and there have been declarations that before passage of such estimates will be permitted, filibustering, to talk them to death, must be reckoned with. Most encouraging is the determination not to permit the institution of a great military force at this time, when, to quote Senator McKellar, "the idea of this country appropriating \$985,000,000 (the estimate that does NOT include the fortifications) for the Army two years after the war has closed, during a time of peace, with millions of trained soldiers in our country easily available, is, to my mind, the height of unrighteousness."

What the feeling among the Senators is may be gained from what Senator Warren says of the duty of Congress.

"We have expenditures at the rate of a billion and a half dollars a year," said the Senator, "for permanent appropriations, and we are asked to appropriate this year, in addition to that, almost four billion dollars, and added to this, come deficiency and miscellaneous sums which may amount to billions. In fact, those in 1920 amounted to over two billion, two hundred and fifty million dollars. Some are asked to appropriate nearly fourteen times as much as we were appropriating when this country became so startled on the

announcement that there had been a billion-dollar Congress.

"It seems to me that the time has come when we should shut the gate entirely to new requisitions and pause and consider whether we want to continue building up departments and commissions and the like of that."

Senator Smoot in talking about the estimates of five billions, and the likelihood of Congress appropriating such an amount, said:

"I want the country to know that we are not going to appropriate that amount of money. If there is strength enough in some of the Senators, to talk to death such tremendous proposed appropriations, we are going to do it; we are not going to appropriate any such amount of money."

"After all, the responsibility is on Congress, on the House and on the Senate," said Senator Overman. "The great appropriations asked, are asked in obedience to the laws that we have passed, and we go helter-skelter, sometimes, and appropriate money without considering the total amount. What is one million dollars or what is five hundred thousand dollars? And we all vote for it, knowing that when the sum total comes it will mount up into the billions of dollars."

It is a healthy condition, surely, when statements such as the foregoing are made by the responsible leaders of Congress.

It is held that the war did much to create a new conscience, but I believe that the unrest which followed the war has led to a new feeling, or, perhaps, a new realization by the members of Congress of their duty to the people of this country who are paying for the privilege of being free as they never have paid before.

Unrest and Sophistry

WOMAN suffrage activities are now blamed for the presence of Bolshevism in the world, and for the advance of Socialism. The blame is thus placed by the president of the National Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women.

"If you have woman suffrage you will have Socialism," she declared in Philadelphia. "If you have Socialism you will have Bolshevism."

And, at the same time, some lingering champions of the lost cause of liquor rise up to explain that the real cause of Bolshevism and unrest is—prohibition.

The presence of Bolshevism in the world requires some serious study. We shall never find out what this means, however, except by talking about Bolshevism. We shall never understand the Socialist movement by talking about suffrage, or prohibition, or Paris styles, or the moons of Mars. We must discuss suffrage by itself, prohibition by itself, other themes by themselves.

And when the plain facts are studied, this is revealed:

When American authorities have discovered preachers of Bolshevism, the majority of the leaders are not woman suffragists. Neither are they anti-woman suffragists. They are mostly aliens without any votes and without any citizenship papers. The true Bolshevist is not interested in suffrage because he does not propose to work through the ballot. As for the regular Socialists, who do propose to work through the ballot, their vote has been smaller recently than it was for several years before the war. Even the grant of votes to women in many states has not augmented the Socialist total.

This is what becomes of efforts to shape Socialism or Bolshevism into an anti-suffrage argument. The fact is that there is no real argument against the simple plan of social justice known as equal suffrage. The opposition cause is ill-argued because it cannot be well argued. The assertion that woman suffrage had any share in advancing Bolshevism is like the assertion of the liquor forces that prohibition advanced Bolshevism. And this is like the assertion that prohibition aided the spread of Spanish influenza. One can blame suffrage and prohibition for anything, from the failure of a crop to an eclipse of the sun—but one cannot make any good and sound argument against them.

Why He Never Won Success

He put no value on cheerfulness and the social amenities.

He never developed his character, except as a money maker.

He always postponed his happiness, and so he never found it.

He was not interested in the world, outside his own narrow circle.

When he had made enough to live on, he discovered that he did not know how to live.

Although he was rich enough to have been a benefactor of his fellow-man he helped nobody.

He had been so busy making money that he forgot how to coin enjoyment out of daily contact with life.

He bored those he met because he had no enriching experiences and no genuine sympathy with other people's problems.

He could not meet men without dropping into talk of business, because he was not interested in other matters.

There was no interrogation point in his mind, except in regard to his own affairs. He had no curiosity about the world in which he lived.