

Radio Talk - August 10, 1941

Good Morning, Friends:

On Thursday, the United States Senate passed the bill granting authority to the President to hold the draftees and other components of the army in service for a year and a half beyond their present term of service. The House deferred consideration of the bill until the Senate had finished with it. Congressman Andrew Jackson May, Chairman of the powerful Military Affairs Committee, which reported the legislation to the House, opened the House debate on the bill on last Friday. Consideration of amendments will begin tomorrow with a final vote expected on Tuesday or Wednesday.

The House Bill provides for an indefinite period of service. The Senate bill provides for a total service of two and one half years. Amendments will be offered to the House Bill to limit the service to two and one half years, to limit it to two years, to a year and a half, etc. Many amendments will be offered. Some limit to the service will likely be adopted. The bill faces a hard fight in the House. There is much opposition even among Democrats.

The Republicans are reportedly almost solid in opposition. The odds, however, favor passage of the bill.

The gentleman who is piloting and directing the bill through the House is the Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, the Honorable Andrew Jackson May - or Jack May as he is affectionately called by his colleagues. Congressman May, who represents the Seventh/District of Kentucky, is in the studio and has kindly consented to favor us with a brief discussion of the bill.

Congressman May:

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Radio Audience:

There has been a lot of talk about this bill, and there will be a lot more, to the effect that somebody has treated the draftees unfairly in that we propose to keep them longer than twelve months. I do not think there is anybody who does not deplore very much the need for putting anybody in the Army. We all deplore that. We all hope that this emergency is going to end soon, but we all realize that our first consideration must be the defense of this Nation.

Now let us see whether anybody has been deceived about what the Congress was doing. One would suppose that we had some little obscure clause hidden away in the draft bill which might permit us at some future time to keep these boys more than twelve months.

As a matter of fact, the very sentence that fixes the 12 months' time also proposes the extension in case the national interest is imperiled. I would like to read it:

"Section b: Each man inducted under the provisions of subsection (a) shall serve for a training and service period of 12 consecutive months, unless sooner discharged - except that whenever the Congress has declared that the national interest is imperiled, such 12 months' period may be extended by the President to such time as may be necessary in the interest of national defense."



This bill, logically and in conformity with the Draft Act itself, simply declares that the national interest is imperiled and authorizes the President to act in accordance with the provisions of the original Draft Act. If the national interest is not imperiled

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this nation in preparation to defend ourselves? Certainly the national interest is imperiled. Our interest is imperiled from the Pacific side as well as from the Atlantic.

General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, has said that it is imperative to keep our armed forces intact. Indeed, he has said the failure to do so might well involve "a national disaster." I have enough confidence in the sound, hard-headed common sense and inherent patriotism of the membership of the House of Representatives of the United States to believe that they are not going, either for political or for other consideration, to disintegrate, disband, and demobilize our national-defense setup in the face of great peril.

Now let us see where we are and whose counsel we are going to take. You know, a certain old man away back down the centuries may have had long hair and whiskers, but he was not a fool by any means. He said that "in a multitude of counsel there is wisdom"; and they called him Solomon. What are we going

to do about advice as to operating and maintaining an army? Are we going down-town and hunt a surgeon and ask him whether we have the right kind of army or not? Are we going out on the plains to the ordinary farmer and ask him whether the Army is what it ought to be to meet its opposition? Or are we going to take the sound, deliberate, and well-considered judgment of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, a professional soldier, who knows what we have and what we have not, who knows the defects, who knows the virtues and the power that he has? Are we going to take his advice or are we going to listen to the high-sounding phrases of "Keep us out of war," and disregard the well-grounded judgment and advice of men of skill and experience such as our Chief of Staff and other military experts? Or are we going to listen to the fanatic who comes around and says, "You are going to get us into war," and that is all you can get out of him? When I go to seek advice as to what my property rights are, I go to the best lawyer I can find. When I want a soldier to fight, I want one that has been trained the length of time necessary to enable him to understand the difficulties of the operation of mechanized units here or a difficult piece of machinery there. I want a soldier who is seasoned and hardened and toughened until he can march all day and fight all night if it is necessary. I do not want a molly-coddle that is too fat and too heavy to move with action swift and prompt when the time comes; I want a trained soldier, and I want him equipped. This is the meaning of this legislation - that we shall train them until they are equipped. Are we going to march raw recruits, like



we did during the World War, to a battle front for training? Or are we going to train them here in our own homeland, in the great cantonments which we have built, so they may be prepared when they are called to go - trained in peacetime, instead of before an oncoming, ruthless mechanized foe with powerful striking force?

If we have an army which is in the slightest degree less prepared than our opponents, we might as well have no army at all; therefore, we have to have the best army in the world, the best equipped army in the world, and the best trained army, because if they are not trained, they do not know how to fight. Let me call your attention to the fact that today's warfare is not like it was during the Civil War. Then it was bayonets and rifles. Today it is machines and motorized equipment and technical things that require skill and training in every direction.

Everyone hopes that our boys will not have to fight, but that decision may not be ours to make. Belgium did not want war. France did not want another war but she had to fight. Her soldiers were not trained for modern warfare and look what happened to them and to France. Yes, we all want peace, but, as for me and all other patriotic Americans, I reject the kind of Peace which France now has. The Stars and Stripes must never be trampled by the Dictator's heel.

Thank you.