

Radio Talk, May 24, 1941

If one word ^{was selected to} ~~could~~ characterize the news of the week, that word would be "ships." The House passed a bill giving the Government wide powers over merchant ships. It seems that every bill we pass gives more power on top of power to the Government. The source of all power is in the people. Congress represents the people and can confer this power upon executive agencies. So, it is power and more power. The people should be jealous of their power because unless sufficient power is retained in the people to preserve liberty, then freedom would vanish behind the dark ~~em~~ cloud of regimentation and bureaucracy. Yet the people certain^{ly}/want to give enough power to the Government to guarantee their protection.

Now is the time for our Merchant Marine to come to the aid of national defense. Congress has spent large sums of money in recent years to strengthen our commercial fleet and permit the construction of new ships. Those expenditures were approved, at least in part, to prepare the Merchant Marine to meet precisely the type of emergency that now confronts us. In reality the Merchant Marine is an auxiliary of the Navy. When war or any other great emergency threatens, it must serve the national interest as faithfully as if the vessels under the American flag were actually owned by the Government.

Most of the shipping companies are already cooperating with the Government in moving defense materials, but a few have refused to adhere to the voluntary plan. The necessity of using every ship to the best advantage is so great that we must not run the risk of relying solely upon voluntary cooperation of ship owners. This can also be truthfully said of other groups.

The defense program has greatly increased the quantity of ~~our~~ our strategic imports. The building of bases and the strengthening of outlying defensive posts has greatly increased the amount of material and men which we must transport from this country. Many, many foreign vessels have stopped carrying American cargo. We have transferred a number of vessels to Great Britain. So the number of ships has been reduced at a time when the demand for transportation by sea has greatly increased. It thus becomes imperative to establish a strict system of priorities ~~of~~ for shipping. Every vessel must be sent where it will best serve. In times like these, Government control over the Merchant Marine is vitally important. In effect, the bill, if it passes the Senate and becomes law and there is little doubt but that it will, drafts shipping for the duration. Certainly that is not to be regarded as a drastic step when men, thousands of young men, have been drafted all over the country; ~~and~~ when one looks at the ^{almost} unbelievable costs of individual items of defense, ^{the steps and delays,} he is made to wonder if all industry, men and machines, should not be drafted for service to their government on the basis of equality in time of war. ~~And, speaking of war, there is a considerable amount of whispering about the Capitol that peace talk is going on in Europe.~~ Modern warfare has proved to be a contest of machines controlled, of course, by men. The production of machines, ships, planes, tanks, trucks, guns, etc. ^{are} just as essential as ~~the~~ ^{an} army of men trained to use these machines. One

must, of course, be very careful in coming to a decision to conscript all labor and industry, even in time of war, because this would turn our own democratic institutions into a totalitarian government. Yet, there is something radically wrong with a government which conscripts men to man the machines of defense and warfare in actual combat, if necessary, for \$30 a month and allows whole groups and organizations of men to stop the production of these machines by striking. ~~(The Capitol has been thrilled by the patriotic leadership of one Mr. Frey, a labor leader on the West Coast who has seemingly done everything within his power to stop the strike there which is holding up the building of ships.)~~ Ships! Ships? beat upon our ears at every turn. Let us look at some of the reasons.

The trans-Atlantic transportation of oil is one of England's gravest problems. It is her most vulnerable spot. The average tanker has a capacity of from 70,000 to 80,000 barrels of oil. On January 1, 1940, Great Britain had 436 tankers. The number of tankers she now has is confidential information. She has suffered considerable losses but by her own production plus the number which the United States has furnished her, the fleet is believed to be no less than 400 of which, however, approximately 100 are thought to be in the Mediterranean and the East. The operation of the fleet is greatly hindered by the slow pace of convoys and the turn-around as well as the normal low speed of tankers. Twenty days per round trip from Great Britain to the Western Hemisphere would seem to be, under the difficult circumstances, a reasonable and conservative estimate.

According to the best estimates, one of the large bombing planes now in operation in the European war will consume from 120 to 280 gallons of gasoline per hour. The amount consumed varies with speed, altitude, and other flying conditions (the lowest consumption corresponds to cruising conditions where an attempt is made to get the longest range possible. The highest consumption results from a high speed effort.) A dive bomber type plane consumes from 50 to 100 gallons per hour. The two-engine pursuit ship will consume as high as 200 gallons per hour in combat with much lower consumption for cruising speeds.

"Why don't the British take the planes we are giving them and let the Germans really know what war is like by bombing Berlin every night?", someone asks? One reason, among others, why this is not done can be found in a calculation of the amount of gasoline necessary for such an operation. To fly from an interior British airport, make reconnaissance, raid Berlin and return, a bomber must be in the air from seven to eight hours. On this task each bomber consumes approximately 1,500 gallons of gasoline. To ferociously bomb Berlin in blitz-raiding fashion, one thousand planes (more have visited London in one night) would be required and they would burn 1,500,000 gallons of gasoline. Better comprehension of this enormity will come by transferring this 1,500,000 gallons to railroad tank cars which have an average capacity of around 9,000 gallons. This train of 169 tank cars, nearly two miles long, as it moved from some Western port, if only for one night's all-out bombing raid, would graphically illustrate Great Britain's supply and transportation problem.

Unless Great Britain can get food, oil, ammunition, planes, and equipment from us, she will have to throw in the sponge. She has lost three times as many ships per month during this war as during the same number of months of the last war. Her losses already exceed six million tons. Great Britain desperately needs ships and we urgently need ships and yet our workers are striking, striking, striking. What's wrong with us? Are we not a united people? Is our system decaying from within?

The Government is worrying over the strike which is holding up the building of ships on the West Coast. The Senate Committee investigating National Defense heard Admiral Emory S. Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission say: "I believe there is justification for every possible step the Government can take up to and including the use of United States forces - be they city, state, or national - to take off this picket line so the people there can go to work." Mr. Bard, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, asserted that the strike was "instigated undoubtedly by selfish and subversive elements." The Capitol has been thrilled by the patriotic leadership of Mr. John Fredley, West Coast Labor leader, who is seemingly doing everything within his power to bring the strike to an end. Senator Tom Connally, a tall, wiry Texan and a member of the Senate ~~Committee~~ Committee investigating National defense, said, "If the Government needs ships and munitions in this emergency and the only way to get them is to take over the plants, then I am in favor of doing it."

It is reported that the men are striking for \$1.15 an hour instead of \$1.12 an hour which they are now getting and for double pay for over-time instead of for time and a half. This kind of a thing is discouraging. When the Nation is in grave peril, no group has a right to put its selfish interests above the Nation's welfare. It would be a bad thing to use the armed forces as Admiral Land suggests, but war itself is bad. There is nothing good about it. If the Government would take some firm action, it would probably not be necessary to take such drastic ^{action} action, but if drastic/is necessary, then let drastic action be taken. If additional law is necessary, then Congress should enact additional law. But as has been said before, the old American custom of merely passing a law will not ~~w~~^solve the problem.

Well, well, one Congressman, though such things as this may make him wish that he were more potent, nevertheless is still only one out of 435 members of the lower House. This is a big Nation, and its decisions must come from the millions of people scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Gulf to the Canadian border.

*The process may be slow
but their will is inexorable.*

Ships! Ships, again? Two cabinet members have called for a repeal of the Neutrality Act and a return to the traditional American creed of freedom of the seas. President Roosevelt referred in one of his press conferences to instances wherein the United States navy had been used to crush piracy and illegality on the high seas. We have the Neutrality Act with its cash and carry provisions, by which our ships are forbidden to go into the war zones. This law is strictly a domestic law and has no bearing upon our

right to the freedom of the seas. It became the law of our land because the American people, remembering the Leviathan and other instances which so inflamed our people in 1917, believed that by preventing our ships from going into the war zones, we could more easily stay out of the raging conflict. ~~The Capitol, the Nation, and the world will be eagerly listening to the words of our leader, President Roosevelt, when he speaks on Tuesday night. He will speak at a time~~ *we may* ~~when there is much whispering of peace talk in Europe.~~

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