Gardner, A. P.

Safety First,

SAFETY FIRST

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. AUGUSTUS P. GARDNER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Friday, January 15, 1915.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the permission granted me by the House on January 15, I print the following two articles which I have recently published in the newspapers:

Chapter I. What is the matter with the Navy?

Chapter II. What ails the Army?

I. WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE NAVY?

ALWAYS SOME OTHER DAY.

"The rule is jam to-morrow and jam yesterday, but never jam to-day," said the white queen in "Through the Looking Glass."

The white queen did not happen to be talking of the American Navy, but she might just as well have been doing so.

Listen to the debates in Congress and you will be convinced that the pages of history furnish an impregnable defense for this country. If John Paul Jones could change a peaceful merchantman into the *Bonhomme Richard* and defeat the British man-of-war *Serapis*, why can not the like be done again? What man has done, man can do—such is the burden of the song of the gentlemen who believe that American genius and American freemen need no preparation for war. Is anyone such a dastard as to deny that our gallant Naval Militia admirals can on any pleasant afternoon forsake their counting houses for the quarterdeck and smash the British superdreadnaughts to smithereens with a fleet of converted Long Island Sound steamers? Perish the thought.

But if you are so skeptical as to be dubious lest the school history book and the Chautauqua lecture may not be adequate to repel the attacks of the effete monarchies of Europe and Asia, then peruse the hearings for the last 10 years before the congressional Committee on Naval Affairs and you may be comforted. A more complete docket of experiments about to be made and contracts shortly to be entered into and reports to be ordered in the near future and boards soon to be appointed can not be found outside the records of the circumlocution office about which Dickens wrote.

The American air man, Wright, was the first in the wide world to build an aeroplane which would actually fly, and ever since that time we have been experimenting and inspecting and reporting and contracting and considering—in fact, we have

been doing everything except *building* aeroplanes. On July 1, 1914, France owned 1,400 aeroplanes, while Uncle Sam owned 23, most of them out of date. However, we recently ordered from abroad an up-to-date French aeroplane with two Salmson motors and an up-to-date German aeroplane with two Mercedes motors. We were in hopes that at last we were in a fair way to establish a little brood of air craft; but just then the European war broke out. Wicked foreigners commandeered our purchases; so here we are again just where we started.

We have as many as 12 submarines on the whole Atlantic coast, not counting those at Colon in the Canal Zone. To be sure, no one has accused the outfit of being any too new fangled; but, then, pray remember that we are still arguing about the best type with which to experiment. Meanwhile the modest proportion of 11 out of those aforementioned 12 divers were not in diving trim when Commander Stirling reported his fleet last November in obedience to the mobilization order.

Instead of the fleet of fast scout cruisers which the General Board of the Navy has told us that we need for our safety we have built just three, and they never were of much account, even when they were new. For about 10 years we have been considering and contemplating types for scouts; but before long it is confidently expected that a satisfactory conclusion will be reached.

Admiral Strauss in his annual report tells us that every American battleship in commission to-day is equipped with obsolete torpedoes, but that orders have been given and plants are being enlarged, and that in two years relief will be in sight.

DAWDLE, DAWDLE, DAWDLE.

So it goes dawdle, dawdle, dawdle all along the line from voter to President. The fact is that the whole Navy has got into a rut. It needs a good hard jolt to get it out of the rut, and then it needs to be trimmed up and enlarged until it is a strong weapon fit for the defense of a strong nation.

Now, do not blame it all on poor old Secretary Daniels. It is only partly his fault, even if he did deprive the seadogs of their grog and enter the sailormen in the lowest grade of the kindergarten.

Of course, Daniels with his super-peace ideas ought not to be Secretary of the Navy any more than a liquor dealer ought to be chairman of a temperance rally, but that is a small matter.

Neither is the blame to be imputed to the Navy bureau chiefs. There has not been one of them for years who at heart would not have been glad to speak right out in meeting and tell the country the whole truth as to our needs. But the country has hitherto been in no listening mood, and it would have been a bold bureau chief, indeed, who cared to face the molten lava from the tongues of the "little Navy" men. Let an officer speak up and he was damned up and down as a seeker for increased rank and power. Let a civilian speak up and he was muckraked from stem to stern as a minion of some armor-plate concern. Let an association or a league speak up and its membership was grilled to find out whether any one of them had a share of steel stock or copper stock or any other kind of stock in the family unto the third or fourth generation. Neither is the blame to be visited on Congress. If any one of us talked about national

defencelessness, some one else talked about jackasses in solon's garbs.

There is just one party who ought to bear the blame, and that is the great American Republic, whose exact mirror we Congressmen are. Six months ago, if I cared to empty a room, all I need do was to discuss our national defenselessness. To-day, if I am anxious to fill a hall, I have but to say, that our Army and Navy will be my topic. Six months ago I should have been a mighty poor politician if I had preached about our lack of national defense. To-day I should be a mighty poor politician if I were to drop the subject.

If I were a real hero, I should promise to keep up this crusade as long as the Lord might grant me grace. Not being a real hero, I content myself with a promise to keep on shouting so long as the press will grant me space.

A COMMISSION TO INQUIRE AND RECOMMEND.

One disease from which both our Army and Navy are suffering is mortmain, especially mortmain of ideas. Mortmain is an old English law term, which signified the "rule of a dead and gone hand." We ought to have this case of mortmain treated by an impartial commission of inquiry with some new blood and no arteriosclerosis of the intellect among the commissioners. What we need is a definite plan for the future. What sort of a plan for the national defense can we get out of four different full committees and four different subcommittees of the House and Senate? Yet it was those committees to which we were referred when a commission of inquiry into our defenselessness was refused us by the administration. Moreover, it does not do to forget that those committees, so far as the experienced members are concerned, are practically invited to inspect the results of their own handiwork.

Let us see how the inspection is faring. Just how far have they gone with this investigation? Both the House Committee on Military Affairs and the House Committee on Naval Affairs have now closed their hearings. Both committees confined themselves almost entirely to the examination of the graybeards of the service and to the particular graybeards whom the committees selected, at that. My requests for the summons of Admiral Wainwright, Admiral Winslow, Admiral Brownson, Gen. Wood, and Gen. Wotherspoon were absolutely and preemptorily refused.

A commission of inquiry, such as I advocated, would summon not only bureau chiefs in all their panoply but the hard-worked juniors and the experienced enlisted men as well. A commission of inquiry would allow the complainant to produce witnesses, a privilege which has been denied me by the committees to which I have referred.

SHORTAGE OF MEN PUT SHIPS OUT OF COMMISSION.

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt and Admiral Badger have testified that we are now 18,000 men short of the number required to man the serviceable part of our present fleet. This estimate takes no account of the crews requisite for vessels now building. The General Board of the Navy maintains that in case of war we should need from 30,000 to 50,000 additional trained men-of-warsmen, and there is no source of supply except about 8,000 naval militiamen.

On the other hand, Admiral Blue has testified that we are only 4,565 men short in case of war and that there is little doubt that this demand would be met by ex-service men now in civil life.

To this Admiral Fiske replies that it would take five years to get our Navy up to a state of efficiency necessary to fight a first-class enemy.

Let us see what all this juggling and counterjuggling of figures means. Does it mean that these admirals differ as to the number of men needed to man any particular vessel? Not a bit of it. It means that they differ as to how many vessels we need and how many vessels we have which are worth manning. The next time, gentle reader, that you hear about our fleet of 33 battleships ask how many of those battleships are in "cold storage" to-day with fragmentary crews or no crews at all. You will find that no less than 12 of them are launched on their way to that bourne whence no traveler returns. Naval authorities euphoniously term the three stages of a warship's road to oblivion as "in reserve," "in ordinary," and "out of commission." To be sure, those same naval authorities gravely inform us that our "cold-storage" fleet can be got ready for battle in from 3 to 12 months, but they are put to it to explain exactly what the resuscitated veterans would be good for when ready for battle. By the way, for fear that these 12 battleships should feel lonely, there are nearly 80 more of our fighting craft "out of commission" or "in ordinary" or "in reserve" to keep them company.

ONLY EIGHT FIGHTING FIRST-CLASS BATTLESHIPS COME NEXT MARCH.

Perhaps you are saying to yourselves, "Even if 12 battleships out of 33 are out of the game, that still leaves a mighty tidy fleet." But how about the other 21 battleships, which constitute our fighting force? Are they 100 percenters? Not by a long shot. Ten of them belong to the so-called first line and 11 of them belong to the so-called second line. Of the first liners, 2 ships, to wit, the *Michigan* and the *South Carolina*, are to be relegated to the second line on March 3, 1915. The honest fact is that on March 4, 1915, we shall have just 8 first-class battleships in full commission. Now, where is the common sense in prating about our 33 battleships?

If anyone tells you that our second line of battleships is a formidable part of our defense, just pin him down and find out how he makes that fact out. I have heard a Navy official testify that the second line would be of service if our first line was destroyed and the other fellow's first line was destroyed as well. So would a police force of octogenarians be of service if policemen were not called upon to handle any criminals under 80 years old. In private most naval officers regard our second liners as an admirable force wherewith to soothe the nerves of the timid in case of war. Perchance for that purpose they might be as useful as the venerable culverins hastily installed at sundry places on the Atlantic Coast at the outbreak of the Spanish War. It would be cheaper, however, for Uncle Sam, when he puts his war paint on, to conduct a daily clinic for the free administration of anesthetics.

Yet the General Board of the Navy says that we need 48 battleships under 20 years old for our defense. For our defense against what nation? For our defense against any nation except England, so we are told.

78166—14434

Ask any member of that General Board which he would rather have:

1. A fleet of 48 battleships ranging in age uniformly from 20 years old down to brand new; or

2. A fleet of 24 battleships, all of them less than 6 years old.

What the American people want, in my opinion, is a Navy up to date, even if it is necessary to enlarge the scrap heap to an extent which would make the bureau chiefs' hair curl if you could find any bureau chiefs with the requisite quantity of thatch for curling purposes.

THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM.

Permit this ignoramus to make a suggestion:

First. Appoint an independent commission of level-headed men, and see to it that not too many of them are imbued with the idea that they know it all about the national defense.

Next, require that commission to summon the best naval experts we have and find out—

First. What war vessels do we need to make us safe against any nation on earth?

Second. How many of those vessels is it safe to put in "reserve"; that is to say, with skeleton crews?

Now, if it is decided that we are aiming too high in taking leave to ask for a Navy capable of swapping shots with John Bull, why then we can cut down the estimates accordingly; but, for heaven's sake, let us know the truth.

The problem as to the number of ships which we can safely keep in "reserve" depends very largely on two factors, as follows:

First. How long does it take to make a landlubber into a man-of-war's man?

Second. How many former men-of-war's men, adequately trained, can be depended on to return to the Navy in time of war?

On those two questions I should as lief have the opinion of a few intelligent junior officers and enlisted men as the opinion of all the naval experts who ever poured over an encyclopedia.

On the answers to the question as to the number and types of war vessels needed and on the answer to the question as to the proportion which can safely be kept in "reserve" with fragmentary crews, depends the preparation of any intelligent plan for the future. On the answers to those questions depends the number of officers and enlisted men which we ought to authorize. Do not forget that our Naval Academy can not be enlarged in a day without serious deterioration, and that the standard of the American man-of-war's man ought not to be lowered by the incorporation in our Naval Establishment of vast drafts of hastily trained recruits. On the answers to those questions depends our building program, and I hope that no one is so ignorant as to fail to realize that a very long time is required for warship construction. So the inquiry can not begin too soon.

MINOR DEFICIENCIES.

The shortage of ammunition to which Secretary Daniels testified before the Committee on Naval Affairs, the shortage of mines which was admitted by Admiral Fiske, the antiquity of the battleship torpedoes which Admiral Strauss pointed out, even the pitiable air-craft situation which Capt. Bristol re-

vealed; all these facts are startling enough, but a determined General Staff of the Navy with plenty of funds could remedy them in a year or two. Not so the deficiencies in the ranks of our fighting vessels nor the deficiencies in the personnel which is to man them.

Dreadnaughts and crews can not be improvised when the war cloud appears above the horizon. Admiral Fiske states that it would take five years to get our Navy in a condition to fight an efficient foreign enemy. This opinion is not indorsed, perhaps, by the Secretary of the Navy, but it is most distinctly in line with what Navy men say when they express their private opinions of the privatest kind.

II. What Ails the Army?

There is still truth in the old, old story that it is the man behind the gun who counts. But for heaven's sake, how far behind the gun do you want the man to be? Must he be so far behind the gun that he has not even a bowing acquaintance with it until war breaks out? Yet that is where we stand to-day. Our Regular Army is an admirable handful. Our reserve army is a farce. A good deal over one-third of our militia absolutely struck their guns off their visiting lists during the whole of last year.

The Men.

We have only 30,000 Regulars available for a field army and 120,000 militiamen besides, so says the report of the Secretary of War. In other words, if every mother's son of them answers the call, we shall have 150,000 men to defend us while a new army is being made. That means that we could cover a battle front of 30 miles on the old Civil War reckoning of 5,000 men to a mile. Thirty miles is a long, long way from the distances which modern battle fronts cover.

How about it? Will all our militiamen turn up if they are summoned, and what will they do when the howitzer begins to howl? It is the correct thing for really patriotic orators to say that by nightfall every militiaman will be on hand, bubbling with heroism.

The fact is that this fiction of a trained citizenry rushing head over heels to arms in time of war is purely the creature of a deft imagination adroitly interpreted by a clever tongue. The strength of the trained-citizenry argument does not lie in its own soundness, but in the fact that most of us are politically estopped from saying what we really think about the militia, or National Guard, as it is called. Owing to the blessed circumstance that my congressional district is amazingly one-sided, I shall make bold to say what I really think. I believe that most men are actuated by the very best and most unselfish motives when they undertake the thankless duties of militia service. I believe that militiamen are keenly conscious of the fact that many persons scoff at them as "tin soldiers." At all events, I know that when I was a militiaman I was sensitively alive to the good-natured superciliousness with which my friends regarded what to them appeared to be my harmless vanity. I believe, moreover, that as the duties are made more arduous and more serious the militia steadily improves, although it becomes harder and harder to fill its ranks. On the other hand, I do not believe that over two-thirds of our militia would materialize in war time, and I do not think that dependence could

be placed upon them until months of severe training and a weeding-out process had hardened them into military shape.

I can not forget that no less than 16 States of the Union fell short by greater or less amounts of furnishing their quotas of troops during the Spanish War. I can not forget that after the first burst of enthusiasm was over cities and towns offered bounties in order to fill their quotas of troops in the Civil War. I can not forget that the National Government later on gave a large sum of money to each veteran who would reenlist, nor that both the North and the South were eventually obliged to resort to the hateful necessity of compelling men to join the army against their wills. All those things are none the less facts because they are unpopular facts and because it is the fashion to blink at them.

Neither can I shut my eyes to the report of the Chief of Staff on the record of the militia for the year ending June 30, 1914. Out of 120,000 militiamen, all told, 23,000 failed to present themselves for the annual inspection, 31,000 absented themselves from the annual encampment, and 44,000 never appeared on the rifle range from one year's end to the other.

WHEN THE CAPITOL WAS BURNED.

The President says that we have always found means to defend ourselves against attack, but the President is quite mistaken. "We shall take leave to be strong upon the seas in the future as in the past," says he in his annual message to Congress. That was the very same position which President Madison took at the time of the War of 1812. "We shall take leave," quoth Madison, and take leave he certainly did, bag and baggage, militia, statesmen, clerks, lobbyists, julep mixers, and all. Down into Virginia he went, leaving the Capitol and the White House to be burned by the victorious British.

Poor Dolly Madison! She saw it all, and she wrote her sister Anna these bitter lines:

> Alas, I can descry only groups of military wandering in all directions, as if there was a lack of arms or of spirit to fight for their own firesides.

But there was no lack of spirit in those militiamen from Maryland and Pennsylvania and Virginia. Far from it. They had spirit enough and arms enough to defend their own firesides, but they did not know how to do it, because they had not been molded into an army. They were but a mob of citizenry under arms. The sad part of it all was that they had had two years in which to prepare, for these events did not occur until the summer of 1814. But the administration of that day had fostered the belief that the country had been misinformed and that the Government had not been negligent of the national defense. Hence it was that these poor militiamen were not ready when the day of trial came. A maddened Nation roared for a sacrifice and a sacrifice was vouchsafed unto them. Armstrong, the Secretary of War, was made the scapegoat, just as Alger was made the scapegoat for our unreadiness to fight Spain, and just as Garrison would be made the scapegoat to-morrow if we were to attempt unsuccessfully to put a large force of men into the field.

But the removal of Armstrong did not erase an exceedingly distressing passage from this Nation's history. That disastrous story harasses us to-day as it harassed our fathers before us. It will fulfill a useful purpose, perhaps, if it serves us as a

bitter warning against being unprepared. On the coast of beautiful County Down, in Ireland, stands the picturesque town of Rosstrevor. For all its picturesqueness, I shall never visit that town and I shall never see the granite shaft which dominates its market place. That graceful monument was erected to the memory of Gen. Robert Ross, who burnt the Capitol at Washington, and its cost was defrayed by the officers of the Chesapeake force. I do not care to see it.

So much for our Regulars and our militia. There remains to be considered our reserve army of former enlisted men. We can dismiss it with a word, for President Wilson says that we are not to depend on a large reserve army. Perhaps it is just as well not to depend on it entirely, for at present it consists of but 16 men.

THE GUNS.

Come to think of it, I have got quite a distance away from the gun in following the man who ought to be behind it. If by the word "gun" a rifle is meant, then we have plenty to give to all comers; that is, at the outset of any war. If, however, when we say "gun" we mean cannon, then the first difficulty facing the man would be to find the gun to get behind.

Nine weeks ago, Maj. Gen. W. W. Wotherspoon, Chief of Staff and virtually head of the United States Army, made his annual report to the Secretary of War. If Gen. Wotherspoon had never done anything in life except write page 12 of his report, he would deserve the thanks of the Nation for that superb act of courage alone. I know of nothing of the sort which approaches it except the courage of Admiral Fiske when last month he testified to the condition of our Navy. Perhaps I ought to include in the same category the fearlessness of Capt. HOBSON, who for years has stood the gibes of his colleagues and faced the ridicule of the press while he thundered in the ears of an unattentive public the sad story of the dwarfing of our Navy's normal growth.

But to return to page 12 of Gen. Wotherspoon's report. He tells us that before a war breaks out we must accumulate rifles, cartridges, field artillery, and field-artillery ammunition. He tells us how much we ought to have and how much is actually on hand or in sight. Here is the table:

Chief of Staff's report, Nov. 15, 1914 (p. 12).

	Munitions required as a reserve in anticipation of war.	Munitions on hand or in process of manufacture.
Rifles	642,541	698,374
Rifle cartridges	646,000,000	241,000,000
Field guns (exclusive of giant guns)	2,834	852
Field gun ammunition, rounds	11,790,850	580,098

So you see that we are short 400,000,000 rifle cartridges, 11,000,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, and 2,000 field guns, if Gen. Wotherspoon's judgment is sound.

Of course, I am not an expert in these matters, but 580,000 rounds of field artillery ammunition seems rather inadequate

as a reserve in the light of Gen. Wood's testimony that Russia shot away 250,000 rounds against the Japanese in the Battle of Mukden alone; yet 580,098 rounds is all we have on hand. I am told that Lieut. Hunsaker's report, lately sent over from France to the War Department, tells of a French cannon firing 500 shots in a day. Of course, that must be an extreme case. But cut the figure in half and you will find that 1,000 such guns would shoot away in two days all the artillery ammunition which we have now plus all which we shall manufacture up to July 1. By the way, Russia had 1,204 guns engaged at Mukden and Japan had 922 guns extending over the same front, so 1,000 guns is not an imaginative figure. I do not know whether Gen. Wotherspoon's estimate of 2,834 field guns is excessive or not. The testimony before the fortifications committee in 1913 showed that Russia at that time had 6,000 field guns, while Germany had 5,000 field guns.

The horrid significance of the whole business lies in the fact that it takes so long to make these munitions of war, even with unlimited appropriations. The good Lord knows that we never shall have unlimited appropriations for public undertakings in defense of our Nation so long as we need unlimited appropriations for public buildings in defense of our seats in Congress.

SLOW WORK MAKING GUNS AND AMMUNITION.

Last year and this year the Committee on Military Affairs took up the question of the length of time required to make munitions of war. The following facts stand out impressively: Working three shifts night and day, all the factories in this country, Government and private as well, can turn out in the first six months after war is declared but 400,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, or only 150,000 more rounds than Russia shot away in a single battle. They can make about 1,600 rounds per day, or enough to keep 8 guns going under an ordinary battle condition of 200 shots per day. In one year all Government and private factories put together can turn out 500 field guns, or one-quarter of our shortage, as Gen. Wotherspoon estimates it.

FRIEND HAY'S TABLES.

My friend HAY, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, publishes a table of our requirements in the way of munitions of war which differs vastly from Gen. Wotherspoon's table. Three times I have publicly asked Chairman HAY to summon Gen. Wotherspoon and put him through his paces for his temerity in ignorantly setting up his opinions against a Congressman's. The first time, the good chairman pointed out that the general had gone on the retired list a few days ago; the second time, he invited my attention to the fact that the hearings before his committee were closed; and the third time, he told me that it was no use summoning Gen. Wotherspoon, because he knew all about his ideas already.

Incidentally my efforts to secure the summons of Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood have been equally unsuccessful. Yet, Gen. Wood is not on the retired list. He preceded Gen. Wotherspoon as Chief of Staff, and he now commands the Department of the East.

As to Chairman HAY's tables, I note, for instance, that he estimates 200,000,000 cartridges as a sufficient equipment for a field army of 460,000 men. That estimate is just one-third of

the estimate made by the General Staff of the Army for that identical number of men. It is true that 200,000,000 cartridges will equip the machine guns and will fill the men's belts and will suffice for the combat train and the first ammunition train, but 400,000,000 additional cartridges are needed for the advance basis and the general bases. At least, the General Staff says so. However, Gen. Crozier, the star witness for the defense, coincides with Chairman HAY on this point. It is fair to admit that the general was frank enough to admit that Army men do not agree with him.

WHY NOT A FEW TITANIC GUNS FOR US?

But where are all the giant guns which we progressive Americans ought to have? How are we off for these wonderful implements of warfare with which other nations have been arming themselves? We still are shaking hands with ourselves over our biggest gun, the 6-inch howitzer, and doubting those newspaper stories about the big field guns in Europe.

Tradition hath it that after the Battle of Crecy a board of French generals was called together to report on the new-fangled weapons called cannon which England had used in the fight. After profound cogitation, the generals decided that no dependence whatever could be placed in gunpowder and that cannon could be useful only under exceptional circumstances never likely to occur again. By a unanimous vote, so the story runs, they reported to their ruler that the trusty manganel and the stout catapult would triumph in the future as in the past. If anyone wishes to know the moral of this tale, let him inquire of our ordnance experts. It may be that we have no need of guns with greater diameters than 6 inches. Still Germany's 16½-inch howitzers and Austria's 12½-inch guns seem to be fairly serviceable in battering to bits anything from an impregnable fortress or a venerable cathedral down to a covered trench. Sir John French—foolishly, perhaps—seems to place some reliance in his 9½-inch thunderers. We smile at their puerile performances and continue to estimate and plan and report and consider and congratulate ourselves that we have the tidiest little 3-inch field guns which can be made, even if we are a little bit slow in rushing into the making of big ordnance. Let those foreigners waste their money on perfecting submarines and aeroplanes, Zeppelins and howitzers. We propose to keep our money in our pockets. That is the way to talk if you want to catch the votes. Let us waitfully watch and then proceed to reap the benefits of the foreigner's experiments without costing us a cent. All of which is vastly crafty, no doubt, provided no foreigner starts to experiment on us.

THE DOWNY DOVE.

Oh, well, what's the odds, since the apostles of pudginess tell us that they are going to put an end to wars by the brotherhood of man. In the sweet bye and bye, perhaps, when we have abandoned the Monroe doctrine and when the Californian intermarries with the Chinaman and the Mississippian intermarries with the negro. Until that day is at hand, do not forget the parable of the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their lamps when the fateful moment came.

78166—14434