

**INCREASE OF MILITARY  
ESTABLISHMENT: HEARINGS BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SIXTY-  
FIFTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION. APRIL  
7, 17, 1917**

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**UNITED STATES COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS**

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# INCREASE OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT

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## HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

THE BILL AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO INCREASE  
TEMPORARILY THE MILITARY ESTABLISH-  
MENT OF THE UNITED STATES

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APRIL 7, 1917

Pt 12



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COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

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## INCREASE OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., April 7, 1917.*

The committee met in executive and confidential session at 10.30 o'clock, a. m., Hon. S. Hubert Dent, jr. (chairman), presiding.

**STATEMENT OF HON. NEWTON D. BAKER, SECRETARY OF WAR, ACCOMPANIED BY MAJ. GEN. HUGH L. SCOTT, CHIEF GENERAL STAFF CORPS; BRIG. GEN. ENOCH H. CROWDER, JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL; AND MAJ. DENNIS E. NOLAN, GENERAL STAFF CORPS.**

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, the committee is ready to hear any suggestions you have to make.

Secretary BAKER. Mr. Chairman, I have drawn or rather caused to be drawn a bill which has been presented to you in typewritten form and which attempts to do what its title states, to authorize the President to increase temporarily the military establishment of the United States. The President in his message to Congress described the policy which he was going to recommend for an increase of the military forces as contemplating the following projects: The increase of the Regular Army and the National Guard to full strength, the immediate drafting into Federal service of the National Guard, and equalization of the term of enlistment under the Regular Army, National Guard, and whatever additional forces might be provided so as to give no preferential character to any part of the National Army.

In addition to that the President was of the belief that the volunteer spirit and principle ought to be preserved to the extent of authorizing the filling of the Regular Army and the National Guard to full strength by that process, if the process proved sufficient to accomplish that end; but that as to the additional forces to be raised a policy ought to be adopted which, without becoming the beginning of the practice of universal training or service and without committing the Government to a present decision of that problem, was yet so far assimilated to it as to call into the service of the United States for the additional forces a class of young men who would be relatively free from the business and domestic entanglements which have hitherto embarrassed the country in the sudden calling of large forces from the body of the people, and who would be selected by a process which was sufficiently democratic to spread the strain over the entire country, and at the same time have men of varying ages within the maximum limit of those who could be spared from the industrial uses of the country. This bill, therefore, does those

things. It authorizes the raising of the Regular Army and National Guard to full strength.

Mr. KAHN. May I ask a question right there?

Secretary BAKER. Certainly.

Mr. KAHN. How many would that be?

Secretary BAKER. It is approximately 623,000, as I recall it. Maj. Nolan, is that correct?

Maj. NOLAN. Both forces under all the increments added to the Regular Army would amount to 634,959 enlisted men. This number includes 12,000 Philippine Scouts; deducting this force gives 622,959 enlisted men.

Mr. CALDWELL. That is, the Regular Establishment and National Guard?

Secretary BAKER. The Regular Establishment and National Guard.

Mr. CALDWELL. How about the National Guard Reserve—that is, the reserve battalions?

Secretary BAKER. Have you those figures, Maj. Nolan?

Maj. NOLAN. This includes all men now in the National Guard and in the National Guard Reserve.

Secretary BAKER. That is, the 634,000 includes the Regular Army, the Regular Army Reserve, the National Guard, and the National Guard Reserve.

Mr. KAHN. How many in the Regular Army?

Maj. NOLAN. There would be 305,000 when raised to full war strength. This includes 12,000 Philippine Scouts.

Mr. KAHN. How many in the National Guard?

Maj. NOLAN. 329,954 in National Guard organizations now existing when raised to war strength.

Mr. KAHN. How many in the National Guard Reserve?

Maj. NOLAN. We have not the figures on that; that is, as to how many men have been passed into the reserve. I can find that out.

Mr. KAHN. Will you please put that information in the hearings?

Maj. NOLAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. CALDWELL. The point I had in mind was this: Under section 79 it is provided that as the National Guard is drawn into service under section 111 reserve battalions shall be organized to take the place of the others. Have you made any figures as to how many that would be?

Maj. NOLAN. That principle is applied to all forces now raised under the proposed act. There will be recruit-training battalions for the Regular Army and for the National Guard.

Mr. CALDWELL. That is in the proposed bill. I mean, have you any figures as to how many men would be produced under the national-defense act if we enacted no new law?

Maj. NOLAN. Those recruit-training battalions could possibly be raised to 1,000 men for each National Guard regiment.

Mr. CALDWELL. In other words, under section 79 of the national-defense act you could continue to duplicate the regiments we now have ad infinitum as long as we had men in the country to duplicate them with?

Maj. NOLAN. To replace losses that occurred in the original organizations and only to that extent. Those recruit battalions could not be



created under section 79 to beyond one for each of the original organizations of the National Guard which were drafted into the service. You could not do it ad infinitum.

Mr. MCKENZIE. In other words, the reserve organizations could not be drafted under the present law?

Secretary BAKER. I do not think the Major would like to have his opinion construed to the effect they could not be drafted; but the plain intention of the national-defense act was that the recruit battalions organized in the States, when the National Guard is drafted under section 111, are for the purpose of recruiting existing organizations and are not themselves independent organizations to be taken as such.

Mr. KAHN. For supplying the wastage, in other words?

Secretary BAKER. Exactly, through sickness and casualties.

Now, in order to create a parity of obligation and opportunity in the Regular Army and National Guard, the age of voluntary enlistment is fixed at 40 years. At present it is 35 years in the Regular Army and 45 years in the National Guard. The age of 40 was selected after a good deal of debate and discussion among the military advisers of the War Department. It was thought it was wiser not to leave the original age limits as they stood, and wiser also not to cut down the age limit of volunteering from the 45 maximum now obtaining with regard to National Guard to the 35 now obtaining with regard to the Regular Army, because there are a very large number of people in the country who have attended military training camps and have cherished military enthusiasm in the country who up to the age of 40 years are given the opportunity of enlisting and volunteering in these forces and being assigned to either the Regular Army or National Guard of their respective States under a perfect equalization of the enlistment period and of the rights and privileges of membership in either organization, so that the age of 40 years was fixed upon as the maximum to be recommended in that regard.

In the event of voluntary enlistment not supplying the necessary number to complete the full strength of the Regular Army and National Guard, the draft power provided in the national-defense act is made available to the President for filling both complements.

The additional force recommended is at the outset 500,000 men selected from the States in accordance with their population, selected from men of military availability between the ages of 19 and 25 years by a process of selective draft. That means the registration of all persons of military availability within those ages and a determination of the quota of each State, crediting to each State the number of persons who have already volunteered into either of the other forces, so as not to allow the military burden to fall with unequal weight upon any part of the population.

The number of men in the country between the ages of 19 and 25 is approximately 6,000,000. Fifty-eight per cent of the men of that age are deemed available militarily. The remaining 42 per cent are encumbered by some sort of disqualification, either physical disability or something of that sort. So that you would have 58 per cent of 6,000,000, or roughly 3,500,000 men available to select this first 500,000 from.

Mr. TILSON. Mr. Secretary, what steps have you taken to prevent the depletion of our workshops of men very much more needed there

than they would be on the firing line; and to prevent that not only through conscription but through persons volunteering, and at the same time permitting them to retain their self-respect?

Secretary BAKER. That question is of very great importance and falls more naturally in another connection, but just to dispose of it at this point I will say that by limiting the maximum age to 25 we have been advised by those who are familiar with industrial conditions we escape for the most part the skilled-worker class. Men are not deemed skilled workers and indispensable in industry until they are of greater maturity than that.

Mr. KAHN. When you speak of 25 years of age, you mean that he is available during his entire twenty-fourth year?

Secretary BAKER. During his twenty-fifth year. That is my understanding.

Mr. KAHN. That would be to the beginning of his twenty-sixth year?

Secretary BAKER. Until his twenty-sixth birthday.

Mr. KAHN. Then he is eligible all the time he is 25?

Secretary BAKER. I so understand the law as it is now written. Is not that right, Gen. Crowder?

Gen. CROWDER. We will have to adopt some arbitrary classification; and in every scheme I have seen we say that all persons becoming 25 years of age in the preceding calendar year or in the preceding fiscal year, whichever date happens to be convenient, shall be within the provision of the law, and all persons becoming 19 years of age during that same period shall be within the provision of the law.

The CHAIRMAN. The draft of the act reads between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Gen. CROWDER. It was expected that regulations would step in there and define what those terms meant.

Secretary BAKER. The language is narrower than I supposed it was.

Mr. KAHN. I recall that in the regulations affecting appointments to West Point you say he shall become eligible on the day he becomes 17 and ineligible on the day he becomes 22.

Secretary BAKER. Perhaps more definiteness might be desirable; but my recollection was it included the twenty-fifth year.

To further answer the question of Mr. Tilson, it has been suggested to the War Department that classes of persons ought to be enumerated who would be excluded from availability—classes of persons engaged in certain lines of activity, as, for instance, persons engaged in operating transportation in the country, persons engaged in highly scientific pursuits relating to either the art of war or the indispensable industries of peace. We have reflected upon that and have reached the conclusion that the European practice is the only one that can be adopted with safety, which is to take the men who flow naturally, either by volunteering or by choice, and, where we find we have taken a man who is indispensable in industry or in science, to give him an honorable discharge and a button of some kind indicating that he is on the public service but is excluded from the active military forces because of his indispensable character in some other relation; that it is better to do it, in other words, after we get them in and find out they are indispensable than to attempt

to exclude whole classes which might well include a number who would not be so indispensable.

Mr. HARRISON. How about the question of religious belief, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary BAKER. The religious-belief section is changed from that which you have in the national-defense act, and which, in my judgment, is inoperable. In the national-defense act you have an exclusion of any person who has conscientious beliefs against the bearing of arms. It is not exactly that language, but that is about what it is. That, of course, makes the question of exclusion purely a question of individual statement and, as lawyers might say, of a self-serving declaration made after the event. We recommend that the provision be modified so as to exclude or exempt those who are actually members of a recognized society which has, as one of its tenets, the disapproval of war.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Secretary, I believe it might be said to be common knowledge in this country now that the laborers engaged in agricultural pursuits have become distressingly limited, and many writers have charged the high cost of living to the fact that people have left the farm, and there is nobody there except a limited few to produce the foodstuffs of the country: Have you taken into consideration in your department the question of excluding or limiting the draft upon those that might be engaged in agricultural pursuits?

Secretary BAKER. We have had that before us both in the department and in the Council of National Defense. Without at all going into the philosophy of the reason why the drain upon agricultural labor has taken place, it is perfectly obvious that the enormous industrial expansion of the country is in large part accountable for it. The apparently superior opportunities of city life—personally, I regard them as more apparent than real—but the apparent superiority of opportunity in city life, the better schools for children, easier access of recreational and diversional opportunities, and the higher wages that have been paid to industrial workers, have certainly largely stripped the country of its young agricultural labor. Congress has already taken some action to restore that balance in the farm-loan act. The balance is not restored. We do face a situation where we might very well seriously depress agriculture in this country by taking too many of the farming class into these forces. The problem is largely one of three peak-load periods in the farming industry, the season of planting, the season of cultivation, and the season of harvesting.

So far as the present year is concerned, it seems entirely unlikely that our arrangements could be perfected so as to begin the drafting of men until after the season of planting has passed and the season of cultivation is well advanced. The season of harvest would therefore seem to be this year the one we have most to consider. The Council of National Defense would undoubtedly be constantly in touch with that situation through the Department of Agriculture, and subordinate committees, and if it should turn out to be at all a necessary thing to do, some system of furloughing from the Army during the peak load of the harvest season might be adopted to relieve that situation.

Mr. KAHN. But if our troops were sent to the battle fronts of Europe, how would you furlough the men?