

I N F O R M A T I O N D I G E S T

The President signed an Executive Order for the induction of six divisions of the National Guard and approximately 50 lesser units for a year's active Federal service. The Order set no time for their induction although tentative dates were announced by the War Department on December 12. The units, comprising the final contingent of National Guard units to be called and involving approximately 108,000 men, were:

The 28th, 29th, 33d, 34th, 40th and 43d Divisions. The headquarters and headquarters batteries of the 71st, 72d, 74th, 75th and 76th Field Artillery Brigades, and of the 102d Coast Artillery. The 103d, 104th, 108th, 109th, 115th and 118th Air Corps Observation Squadrons. The 372d Infantry, and the 104th, 107th and 115th Cavalry. The 119th, 144th, 168th, 172d, 177th, 179th, 181st, 182d, 187th, 188th, 191st and 258th Field Artillery.

Anti-aircraft units of the 205th, 207th, 209th, 210th, 212th, and 217th Coast Artillery. The anti-aircraft units of the 101st, 103d, 104th and 107th Coast Artillery battalions. The 191st Tank Battalion and the 194th Tank Battalion, the 103d and 105th Anti-tank Battalion and the 101st M. P. Battalion.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Secretary of State Hull testified before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee according to the United Press, that the safety and security of the western hemisphere "render imperative all possible speed" in granting the democracies material aid in their fight against totalitarian aggression. Mr. Hull said that if Great Britain were defeated "Germany could easily cross the Atlantic" unless we were prepared to "do what Great Britain is doing now."

Germany's efforts, Mr. Hull said, would first be directed at other parts of the hemisphere more vulnerable than the U.S. He declared that subversive forces now being held in check in many Nations might not be held off if the control of the high seas passes to Germany.

Condemning what he described as Germany's "effrontery and cynicism," in insisting on the observance of international law by other Nations while she is violating it, Mr. Hull said the U.S. "must not be deterred or diverted" by its threats in this respect from giving aid "to the victims of aggression."

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Attorney General Jackson disclosed that organizations subject to foreign control which engage in political or military activity will be required to answer more than 225 detailed questions concerning their finances, affiliations, activities and organizational set-ups. The questionnaire was compiled in compliance with the Voorhis Act passed by Congress last year. The legislation provides that the questions must be answered within 30 days.

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Nelson A. Rockefeller, Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics announced "a wide scale program for the use of motion pictures as a medium for promotion of closer relations and better understanding among the American Republics." The program involves the production by commercial motion picture companies of feature and short films on central and South American themes, increased newsreel coverage of South American events, and the appointment of industry committees to facilitate these endeavors.

John Hay Whitney, Director of the Motion Picture Division of the Coordinator's Office, announced that an Executive Committee will be headed by Y. Frank Freeman, President of the Association of Motion Picture Producers. Cooperating committees will be headed by Joseph Schenck (Committee on Visits to South America); Sam Briskin (Committee on South American Film Facilities); Walter Wanger (Committee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences); Gunther Lessing (Short Subjects Committee); Cedric Gibbons (Art Direction Committee); and Sheridan Gibney (Committee on Story Material).

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A United States Commission to study health conditions, epidemic control, transportation and evacuation of children in Great Britain will leave New York Saturday. The Commission's trip was conceived and organized by Federal Security Administrator McNutt and approved by the President following a request by the War Department. The Commission expects to stay in London a month and will try to visit other war-torn countries including France and Germany.

The Commission includes Dr. Thomas Parran, Director of the Public Health Service; Major Eugene W. Ridings of the War Department General Staff; F. C. Horner, Transportation Consultant to the NDAC; and an expert on children's problems to represent the Social Security Board. They will be accompanied by a staff of technicians.

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Full agreement by all branches of the food distribution industries on food procurement policies of the defense program was announced by Donald M. Nelson, Director of the Division of Purchases of the Office of Production Management, following a meeting of the Food Procurement Advisory Committee. At the meeting, Col. Paul P. Logan, Chief of Subsistence, Quartermaster Corps outlined specific procurement policies which were approved by the Committee:

1. Continuance of competitive bidding as the basic procurement policy;
2. Eligibility of any responsible vendor to submit bids;
3. Purchase of supplies, so far as possible, in carload lots, f.o.b. destination point to equalize army business among suppliers in all parts of the country;
4. Inspection of all goods at the point of origin, (Such a system, Colonel Logan pointed out, should avoid the difficulties of delays, returns and unnecessary claims).

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Metcalf Walling, Administrator of the Division of Public Contracts of the Department of Labor, issued a statement that despite a different impression in some quarters, "...subcontractors as a class are not subject to any of the provisions of the Public Contracts Act except the one prohibiting the performance of work in any plants, factories, buildings, or surroundings or under working conditions which are insanitary or hazardous or dangerous to the health and safety of employees engaged in the performance of a contract subject to the Act. The Law since its inception has been so limited and there has been no change in the rulings of the Department in this regard."

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WPA announced that \$157,000,000 in WPA funds were earmarked for national defense projects during the first six months of the fiscal year. In a radio address, Acting WPA Commissioner Hunter declared that over forty percent of all airport developments in the last five years had been accomplished by WPA labor.

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Secretary Perkins reported there were 750 approved apprenticeship systems in 34 States at the end of 1940 in contrast with the 433 systems in 28 States as reported in 1939, an increase of 317 or an average of 25 a month. Included in the 750 approved systems were 145 in private plants.

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Wage and Hour Administrator Fleming, speaking before the annual convention of the National Sand and Gravel Association in Cincinnati, called for "a bill of particulars" in connection with possible complaints that wage and hour standards are impeding the defense program.

Stating that so far criticisms "seem to come from editorial sanctums and certain college classrooms..." and not from experienced business men and manufacturers, Colonel Fleming said "we need to know exactly which are the industries that cannot meet their defense obligations unless they are permitted to pay straight time after 40 hours. And if there are some industries in which the hours should be relaxed, we need to know whether they should be relaxed for everybody in those industries or only for a few in key positions."

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Defense Housing Coordinator Palmer issued a statement that "up to the present time...contracts have been awarded for the construction of 28,927 dwelling units, funds have been allocated for 49,276 units and, under the stimulus of the new program, it is estimated that during the present month, allocations for 25,000 additional dwelling units will be made. All of this building is taking place in vital defense areas."

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Secretary of Agriculture Wickard, speaking at the Farm and Home Week convocation at Lafayette, Indiana, said "the important thing to remember" is that the long time trend in our exports (of farm products) is downward... the Nations of the old world have been trying to become self sufficient and "new land in this hemisphere and in the eastern hemisphere has been broken out for cultivation by the millions of acres in the past 40 years."

"Tremendous surpluses were on hand before the war broke out. These tremendous world-wide surpluses are not a result of the war. And if the war were to end tomorrow...they would probably still be there...isn't it in the interest of farmers, and the Nation, to lay plans accordingly?" he said.

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

H. H. Bennett, Chief of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, said in his annual report to the Secretary of Agriculture that soil erosion is costing the United States more than \$3,800,000,000 a year and has already damaged half the land of the country. The productive soil wealth of the Nation is not as great as most people commonly believe it to be, according to Mr. Bennett. He warned "that the United States may eventually be face to face with a serious land shortage unless erosion is effectively and promptly halted."

Erosion must be controlled not only on the good land of the country, he said, but on the medium-quality cropland and on the large areas of forest and grazing land as well, if the U.S. is to support its population adequately and counteract the growing menace of floods and silting.

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THE CONGRESS

The House Naval Affairs Committee, the United Press reported, approved a bill authorizing the Navy to spend \$300,000,000 to provide warships with improved anti-aircraft defenses. The Committee acted after Admiral Robinson, Chief of the Bureau of Ships, testified that the dive bomber is a serious threat to the fleet and that even with the new money it would take two or three years to equip U.S. warships with topside shields and more anti-aircraft guns.

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(Unless otherwise indicated, all information herein is from official sources.)