

INVESTIGATING THE WAR

Chairman Graham of House of Representatives' Special Committee Outlines Scope of Inquiry Into Expenditures

ON the surface the Peace Treaty and the League of Nations command more interest than anything else in Washington, but underneath the surface, in the cloakrooms of Senate and House and wherever politicians gather for more intimate talk, the paramount subject of discussion is that of the Congressional investigations and how deep their probe is to go. One is now getting under way—the investigation into War Department expenditures during the war. The large question as to how far down it will go is answered below by William J. Graham, Chairman of the five-armed inquiry committee of the House. The methods of his committee furnish an indication of the course to be followed by the other Congressional searchers.

A Republican leader in Congress remarked the other day that an investigation was practically certain in each of several departments, more or less extensive, as the circumstances might require. The list of departments to be scrutinized, as collected from various Republican members of Congress, follows:

Alien Property Custodian, Department of Agriculture, Food Administration, Federal Housing, Navy Department, Post Office Department, President's fund for Peace Conference expenses, United States Shipping Board, War Department, War Risk Insurance, and War Trade Board.

None of the investigations, the Republican leader said, would be inquisitorial, but they would be undertaken and conducted only so far as the interests of the country demanded. Democratic leaders scoff at such assertions. Visibly they are disturbed at the prospect, not because of apprehension that the probes will do permanent injury to the Administration's war record, but because the Republicans, being in charge, can guide the investigations and explode whatever is collected at the right psychological times from a political standpoint.

"What they are going to do," said one Democrat, "is to keep these investigations boiling along, or some of them, clear into the Presidential campaign, and release their stuff at the time when the voters are beginning to think of the coming Presidential election. And they are not only going to tear everything wide



Representative William J. Graham of Illinois, Chairman.



Representative Royal C. Johnson.



Representative J. C. McKenzie.



Representative E. L. Hamilton.



Representative Charles F. Reavis.

HEAD OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE AND FOUR SUB-CHAIRMEN.

open; they are going to pull up the flooring besides."

It would naturally be suggested that

with various investigations in progress at the same time, Congress could not follow up the constructive legislation on

so many lines that the country expects. The Republicans saw the danger, as the plan for the investigation of the War Department shows. A special committee was appointed for the inquiry, and the regular Military Affairs Committee can concentrate its attention on legislative work. Wherever a broad investigation is to be made, this will be the policy, according to the party chiefs, and the arrangement is for the Senate and the House not to duplicate investigations. During the war investigations were conducted by regular committees in charge of that branch, and as an addition to other work the inquiries weighed heavily on them.

Mr. Graham, who is a lawyer and succeeded Clyde H. Tavenner, Democrat, Fourteenth Illinois District, in the Sixty-fifth Congress, was asked in Washington the other day to outline the plan of investigation to be followed by his committee. He said:

"The purpose of the investigation is a general audit of all the accounts of the War Department. We propose to start with the appropriations and trace them to the place where the money was expended. This will be done in all branches of the War Department. It is probable that the work will divide itself into five branches — Quartermaster's supplies, ordnance, aviation, overseas expenditures, and camps and cantonments. Incidentally we will investigate many branches of the departments named. For example, the spruce production and the nitrate plant at Muscle Shoals, also the one at Cincinnati, the factories engaged in the manufacture of munitions and war materials. The members of the committee will probably be engaged continuously in this work for the next six months, to the exclusion of other Congressional work.

"The reasons for making the investigation are:

"First, that the people have a right to know how the vast sums of money raised by taxation have been and are being expended.

"Second, that by a full and complete knowledge of the defects of organization and administration in this war we may learn useful lessons for the future.

"Third, that the expenditures of the War Department are continuing today

on as large a scale as they have been during the war. By a careful investigation these expenditures can be stopped.

"Incidental to these purposes, if it is developed that there have been those who have taken advantage of the occasion, while our young men were fighting and dying over there, to rob the Public Treasury, then such persons may be assured that this investigation will disclose their identity to the people, so that proper steps may be taken for their punishment. The committee has no friends to reward or foes to punish. The investigation will be fair, thorough, and nonpartisan. We purpose to begin at once, as soon as the necessary clerical force is obtained, and to proceed continuously until it is finished.

"It is a large undertaking. The War Department has spent more than \$16,000,000,000 up to this time; so far as it is humanly possible all expenditures made by the department will be fully audited by this committee. We expect that one of the five sub-committees—the one in charge of the purchases abroad—will go to France."

Mr. Graham was asked to illustrate how an item of expenditure would be traced to its source.

"Take the appropriations made for the Quartermaster's Department," he answered. "The Quartermaster's Department must account for the expenditure of all that sum of money. Among the items for which this money was expended we find an item, say, for 2,000 suits of khaki clothes. We want to know from

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whom they were bought, how much was given for them, whether they were purchased on competitive bids, whether the price was more than is ordinarily paid for that sort of thing, how the contract was made, when the Government received the clothing with respect to the time the order was given, what was its quality, and whether any one interested in the company having the contract bore any relation to the men who let the contracts. In other words, we want to know how much the Government spent and what it got for it.

"Investigation along such lines may lead us into factories on other questions, as to what plant the bidder had, how much was his equipment to fill the order as agreed upon, and all incidental questions of the like.

"Take another example: Suppose we find the ordnance people wanted to buy some seven-inch shells. We would want to know to whom the contract was let, what the terms were, how much profit

was paid to the contractor, then how many shells were received, and whether they were received in time to be of any use to the Government. This will lead us into an inquiry on the cost of steel, what the profits of the steel companies were, and into all manner of side lines. The Ordnance Department spent \$4,500,000,000 during the war, and the probabilities are that the facts will disclose that we did not receive any shells in time to be effective during the war in any appreciable amount, but that what we required we bought from abroad."

Reports coming to Washington indicate that some business men over the country have felt apprehension that the investigations would be conducted in a way that would interfere with progress in reconstruction—that in seeking political material the investigators would be likely to wander far afield, producing needless uneasiness and agitation. Mr. Graham was asked about this.

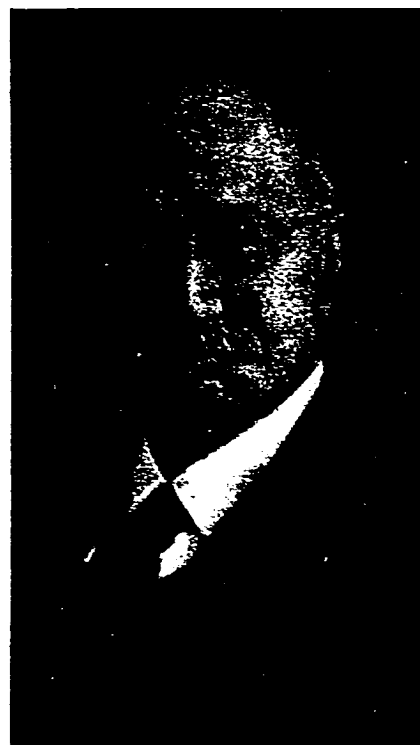
"The committee is not intended to be

and will not be a Grand Jury," he said. "It is not intended to be inquisitorial or captious. The public is entitled to a careful audit of the accounts of this war. The work of the committee will confine itself closely to that line."

Each of the five sub-committees will consist of three members, two Republicans and one Democrat. The members, besides the General Chairman, are: Republicans—Hamilton, Michigan; McKenzie, Illinois; Johnson, South Dakota; Reavis, Nebraska; Magee, New York; McCulloch, Ohio; Bland, Indiana; Jeffries, Nebraska, and MacGregor, New York; Democrats—Flood, Virginia; Garrett, Tennessee; Doremus, Michigan; Donovan, New York, and Lea, California.

Up to May 1 the expenditures of the War Department amounted to \$16,300,000,000, of which \$4,323,000,000 was for ordnance, \$974,000,000 for camps, cantonments, and manufacturing establishments, and \$948,000,000 for aircraft. The War Department inquiry will be the heaviest investigation to be undertaken by this Congress, ranking the shipping and housing inquiries, which are likely to be the next two in extent.

The fact that departments and war agencies are singled out for investigation does not mean, it is asserted by Republicans, that there is basis for suspicion of mismanagement or wrongdoing, but merely that on account of the large sums disbursed there should be a checking up of accounts.



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An orchestra, composed of eighty musicians, under the direction of Arnold Volpe, has been chosen from the Metropolitan Opera House, the Philharmonic Society, and the New York Symphony orchestras. Arnold Volpe has been active in New York since 1902 as conductor of the Volpe Symphony Orchestra, the Young Men's Symphony Orchestra, and the Municipal Orchestra.

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