

WILL THE UNITED STATES BE EASY PREY FOR STRONG FOE?

Army and Navy Experts See New Dangers Growing Out of the Great War and Point Out Where We Are Weak to Resist Attack

By ROBERT G. SKERRETT.

THE present state of affairs is criminal!

In this manner Senator du Pont has stigmatized our military unpreparedness and scathingly condemned the attitude of the present Administration toward national preparedness.

If this denunciation had been a campaign outburst some allowance would be necessary on the score of political hyperbole. It was, on the contrary, a patriotic protest born of an intimate knowledge of the conditions disclosed during certain hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs of the United States Senate.

It is a grave pity that the American public does not give these legislative proceedings careful study. Every foreign ministry of war and ministry of marine makes these documents objects of the closest scrutiny; and our potential enemies know much better than the American taxpayer just where we are weak, how much we lack, and how generally futile would be any sustained effort to resist a determined and a powerful foe. And this despite the fact that the world's greatest war is now in its third year.

As a matter of fact we know that the reorganized regular army is mostly on paper. True, an increase in enlisted personnel has been authorized, but where are the officers needed to command these men if we ever get them? The officer is a permanent appointee; the quota of the ranks can be changed at any moment by a Presidential order! In other words, officers are not made in a day, and the Chief Executive can nullify by a scratch of the pen the vote of a legislature that parades as a token of military preparedness.

We know what has happened since the "Federal Militia" came into being through the Hay bill. It took the Government two months and more to reassemble to mobilize upon the Mexican border a matter of something like a hundred and ten thousand of these staid soldiers. Not only that, but this unseasoned and in many particulars untrained organization was assembled for its work improperly equipped, and in some vital essentials such remains the state of affairs even to-day. It is no wonder then that of-

munition, and they would attack the main lines of communication running between the principal Eastern cities and from the Eastern cities to the West.

Elaborating this evil picture, Gen. Wood continued: "He would probably hold New York and Boston; possibly the entire arms and munitions area from Boston to Baltimore; and exact such tribute as he wanted; then take whatever action might be necessary to prevent us from longer asserting the Monroe Doctrine. He would take anything he wanted. It would be just a question of how much he wanted." And how may a foe effect this in the quickest way and whence would it be possible for one of them to strike from within the continental limits to achieve this very end? The answer is a startling one, as military strategists put it, for it shows how conditions have changed about us while we have grown to look beyond the seas for our possible antagonists. In the popular mind Germany and Japan have loomed large persistently as the likeliest of our foes.

Our neutrality has lost us friends, if it hasn't actually made enemies for us, and the bitter commercial struggle that is bound to come will strip us of our gains if we are not strong enough to fight for them. Indeed there are officers in both branches of our defensive services that do not hesitate to say that our day of reckoning may come within the next two years, and England may be the first to call us to account as she settles back grimly to win again her dominance in the world of trade. Heretofore it has been the custom to enlarge upon an invasion from overseas, and those satisfied with our defenses—aboard and ashore—have pictured the difficulties of transporting anywhere from 150,000 to 250,000 troops across the Atlantic. As a rule our battle fleet has been proclaimed strong enough to effectually interfere, and we have been treated with imaginary sinkings of scores upon scores of heavily laden, defenceless enemy transports. Conditions have changed; we may be humiliated and defeated without a single troopship venturing across the ocean.

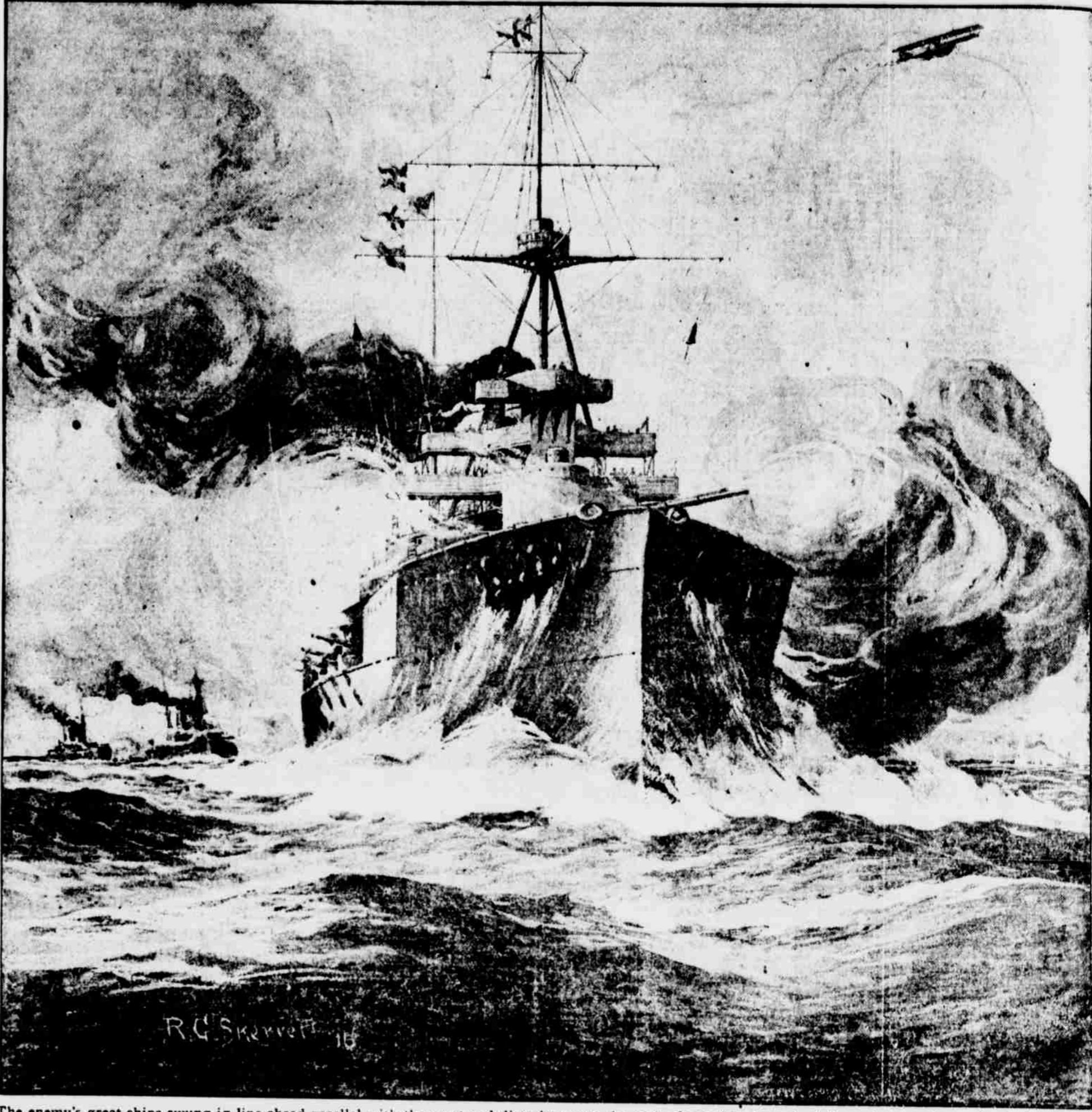
According to the dictum of our military strategy of the past, "Canada is a hostile neighbor." England could not afford to strike us because we could overrun and dominate the Dominion. That was a fact until Canada, thrilled with the call to arms, rushed with the flower of her manhood to help in the defence of the British Empire. The Dominion has become in fact a military nation, and when the world war ends Canada will have at her disposal quite half a million trained men and battle tried veterans. She will be infinitely stronger

than our army short of officers and probably likewise lacking in enlisted men, what could we do against a force such as Canada could speedily put into the field? Our opposition would be of little avail, and the stronghold of our defenses would thus be taken in the rear, and some of our most vitally necessary naval stations brought under the fire of the enemy's guns and our ships and our forts impotent to aid.

With this done, Great Britain could bring her battle fleets to bear at leisure. True, her ships would probably have to fight and fight hard. At the end of sixty days, he answered: "Within that time." And within two months, so it would seem, our army and our navy would be hobbled and the foe, pursuing the dual method of attack described, would be able to dictate his own terms. And yet, the Administration's military spokesman, the Secretary of War, speaking of the army bill, says: "Taken in conjunction with the navy bill, the United States may pursue its destiny in tranquility, assured of a defensive strength meet for any emergency."

And if Great Britain be not hostile to us, what is our military readiness to meet an overseas attack—assuming our Atlantic coast unmenaced and the fleet forced to seek shelter behind our coast defenses or surprised in harbor behind those supposedly sheltering guns? In other words, how far is the army able to cooperate effectively with the navy to the end that the latter may do the best expected of it? Commonly it has been the custom in discussing this interrelation to consider the action of the two arms to be largely independent. That is to say, the function of the navy is to intercept the foe far seaward and either to bring him to action or to prevent the landing of an invading army. Failing in this, then the burden of defence falls upon our seacoast batteries and our mobile army. But this only tells half the story. The effective work of the navy may hinge primarily upon equally effective work on the part of our fixed coast defenses.

Brig-Gen. Erasmus Weaver, chief of the Coast Artillery Division, tells us that: "The coast fortifications, the fixed fortifications, are placed at certain strategic points where they defend certain anchorages and certain bodies of water and certain cities or valuable properties. They are intended to de-



"The enemy's great ships swung in line ahead parallel with the coast and directly across the path of our ships bound out from their anchorage back of our forts."

the enemy on the high sea it accomplishes the coast defence by destroying the enemy's navy if possible. If it were tied to any defence its utility would be decreased just in proportion to its decreased mobility. Then, secondly, are the coast defenses which furnish the points of support and the harbors of refuge and the safe anchorages for the navy, where the ships of the navy can at any time come in for repairs. And then, third, there is the mobile army to meet any attack that is made on the undefended part of the coast. These three constitute a complete coast defence.

On the Atlantic coast we have permanent defenses at Portland, Me.; Portsmouth, N. H.; Boston, New Bedford, Narragansett Bay, Long Island Sound, Eastern New York, Southern New York, the Delaware River, Baltimore, the Potomac, Chesapeake Bay, Cape Fear, N. C.; Charleston and Savannah; on the Gulf coast we have fortifications at Key West, Tampa, Pensacola, Mobile, the entrance to the Mississippi River and works building at Galveston, and on the Pacific coast the fixed defenses are located at San Diego, San Pedro, San Francisco, the mouth of the Columbia River and the

southern entrance and shores of Puget Sound. At Portsmouth, Boston, Narragansett Bay, New York city, Norfolk, Charleston, Key West and Pensacola we have naval stations of the utmost importance to the effective working of our fleet. Without exception every one of these vital strategic points can be brought under the fire of an enemy's long range naval guns without the slightest risk of injury from our defending permanent batteries. Not only that, but the foe can bombard the cities of Portland, Portsmouth, Boston, New Bedford, Newport, New York, Charleston, Savannah, Key West, Tampa, Pensacola, San Diego, San Pedro, San Francisco and Astoria while lying securely beyond the reach of the weapons placed in the neighboring forts or batteries to protect them from that direct attack.

And what about those points of support, harbors of refuge and safe anchorages for the navy? Where are they? They don't exist, simply because our coastal batteries have long since been outwitted by the guns mounted upon the biggest of foreign battle craft. New York has been advertised as an isolated example of this peril, but a few minutes study of the

charts of any of these ports with the known maximum range of our coast defence guns will show how general is this menace to our seacoast cities. And thus being the case, let us see what may all too easily be the result of our battle fleet, which hitherto counts upon "optimal and important" cooperation of the permanent defenses. For example, take New York city, and position so that his line stands to the single file of our ships like the top of the letter T. In military parlance, this means that he is able to "cap" our ships, and while their fire is reduced they can concentrate broadside salvos from all of his vessels upon our battle craft one by one as they try to force their way seaward. What is bound to be the result assuming the foe's marksmanship to be equal to their

own? One by one as they advance our dreadnoughts will be battered into bits by sheer weight of metal and an overwhelming attack, and while our coast defenses are impotent to help or even to reach their target, the enemy can destroy our vessels seriatim. Again, should our ships be outnumbered and outgunned upon the open sea and forced to seek shelter either for repairs or for security within any of our



doors of this Federalized service have resigned by hundreds and discontent is rife among the rank and file. "Benevolent neutrality" is a thing of the past; President Wilson has recently confessed as much. In so many plain terms he has told us that the United States could not again maintain its neutrality in another great war. Why? Because the nation that is strong enough to fight and won't do so becomes an object of contempt and a probable target for attack, especially when other countries are battling for what they consider right and interests are worldwide and none can be indifferent to the outcome. As he expresses it, "The great European war has served at least to show us this one thing, that the world itself has changed." But have we changed? Have President Wilson and his associates done their part to make us ready for this change? Have they made us strong where strength will be vitally necessary in the near future? Have they really had their heads on their shoulders, have they had their eyes on the prize, have they had their feet on the ground, have they had their hands on the plow, have they had their hearts in the work, have they had their backs to the wall, have they had their minds on the prize, have they had their feet on the ground, have they had their hands on the plow, have they had their hearts in the work, have they had their backs to the wall?

than ourselves, equipped as we are not, and a strike rapidly a stunning and a compelling blow. Fancy what might happen if Canada made a hostile move of this sort by way of a declaration of war in support of the policy of the mother country. We have absolutely nothing along the border capable of halting an aggressive move of this description, and in order to dominate the area between Boston and Baltimore which Gen. Wood has described what would be more likely than an invasion straight down the Hudson Valley? We couldn't prevent it, as we are situated to-day and hence, owing to the action of the present Administration, with a disorganized Federal militia, and with a regu-

lar army short of officers and probably likewise lacking in enlisted men, what could we do against a force such as Canada could speedily put into the field? Our opposition would be of little avail, and the stronghold of our defenses would thus be taken in the rear, and some of our most vitally necessary naval stations brought under the fire of the enemy's guns and our ships and our forts impotent to aid.

THE NEWS OF THE WEEK IN RHYME

RUMANIA has parted with
The bridge at Cernavoda.
The King of England now and then
Incurs a Scotch and soda.



The Allies took a firmer grasp
On Constantine's—ah—ermine.
Von Mackensen
Is loose again,
And Munsterberg's a German.
Our Mr. Baker spoke a piece
Which turned the nation torrid;

We can't remember what he said,
But it was Something Horrid.
Fresh eggs, the current rumors say,
Are worth their weight in paper;
They're served by some
In platinum—
And Villa cut a caper.

Sir Woodrow said that he had done
As well as he expected.
In spite of which the Colonel thinks
That Hughes should be elected.



How solemn are the orators
Who bid us face The Question;
They are a strain
Upon the brain—
An aid to indigestion.

A young and tender hearted thief
Who filched a stranger's raiment
Pursued his victim down the street
And doffed the clothes in payment.



Long Island has been widely robbed,
According to its habit.
The furs this year
Are rather queer;
'Tis well to keep a rabbit.

The Eastern Hemisphere enjoyed
A loan from Mr. Morgan.
Sir Bryan groomed himself to play
The Democratic organ;
His lightsome touch is on the keys,
His foot is on the pedal.
The Kaiser's son
Has lost Verdun,
Despite his shiny medal.

By Dana Burnet



A charge of nitroglycerine
Disturbed the subway service,
But such a detail would not make
The folk of Gotham nervous.
They're trained to shocks of all degrees,
Their lives are very zestful;
They quite delight
In dynamite—
It is so very restful.

