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General Somervell, chief of the Army Services of Supply, appears before the Truman Committee

The Truman Committee

INVESTIGATIONS, reports, and criticisms are so plentiful in the nation's capital that the public sometimes wonders what to believe and what to discard. But this cannot be said of the work done by the Truman Committee. In three years, it has won the nation's highest confidence, and everyone pays close attention to what it says.

As the Senate's special committee to look into the activities of the war program, it has won a reputation for being fearless, impartial, and thorough. It has meticulously refrained from favoring any special political or economic interests, and it has been fair in its criticisms and praise. Issues have been raised over the committee's opinions and conclusions, but most people do not question its sincerity.

The committee has concentrated on these questions: Is everything possible being done to speed victory? Is the nation getting its money's worth from the huge sums spent on the war program? Are we making sensible preparations for the gradual change from war production to civilian production?

To answer these questions, the committee attempts to be as scientific as possible. It seeks the best available opinions, and it employs skilled investigators to assemble facts.

Public Action

It not only makes long reports to the nation on the results, but it influences actions in Congress and in the executive departments of the government. Officials in the government have learned that the committee cannot easily be put off.

The latest report of the Truman Committee is a good example of its work. It covers a variety of subjects—war production, civilian goods, labor conditions, inflation, transportation, raw materials, and farm machinery, to mention a few.

The way it handles war production vs. civilian production is typical. It reminds the nation that there can be no civilian production

at the expense of military needs. But it also criticizes the Army for having piled up too great surpluses of certain things. It warns that the public must be given consideration, and that there is no point in piling up military supplies to the point of clogging.

War production, continues the Truman Committee, is going well. For this it praises both business and labor. But it has likewise criticized both groups in the past when criticism was necessary—another indication of its fairness.

On occasions, the Truman Committee has attacked "needless" waste in certain Army and Navy spending. It has studied a number of the critical raw material shortages, such as in rubber and aluminum, and made recommendations for improvement. And it has presented its conclusions on how various



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Senator Truman

war agencies could be operated more efficiently.

The chairman of the committee, and the man from whom it takes its name, is Senator Harry S. Truman, Democrat of Missouri. His nine associates—five Democrats and four Republicans—represent widely scattered states.

In addition to Truman, the Democrats are Senators Tom Connally of Texas, Carl Hatch of New Mexico, Mon Wallgren of Washington, James Mead of New York, and Harley Kilgore of West Virginia. The Republicans are Senators Ralph Brewster of Maine, Harold Burton of Ohio, Joseph Ball of Minnesota, and Homer Ferguson of Michigan.

The committee's staff is headed by Hugh Fulton, a lawyer chosen for his excellent record in a successful law firm. There are also three assistant attorneys and some special field investigators.

Although members of this committee are of differing political parties, they work together harmoniously, and they have never been divided in their conclusions about an investigation. Each day they meet for a conference in the "dog house"—a small office which Truman maintains.

Some Truman Committee investigations are started by the members themselves. Most, however, result from tips received outside. Plowing through the hundreds of letters it receives, the committee chooses its subjects for investigation from suggestions offered by people who are close to the actual operation of the war program.

Launches Hearings

When evidence accumulates showing that a particular part of the war effort should be studied, the committee launches hearings. The management of the hearings is parceled out to the various members according to subject matter, since each man has his own specialty.

Business men, labor leaders, and government officials are called to give testimony. After this has been presented, the committee members and their attorneys conduct a period of questioning. Then the group discusses the results, draws up its recommendations, and issues its report.

The amount of money which the Truman Committee has saved the government, through these methods, is large when contrasted with its own expenses. To save Uncle Sam an estimated billion dollars, the committee has spent less than \$200,000.

And our whole war effort has benefited by the work of this committee. While its conclusions on any particular issue are open to question and debate, as should be the opinions of any individual or group, the Truman committee's record of honest fact finding and impartiality is one of which the nation can be proud.