

DECLARES AIRCRAFT COULD NOT CAPTURE PHILIPPINES ALONE

**Admiral Jones, Contradicting
Mitchell, Says Foe Would
Need Aid of Fleet.**

DEFENDS BOMBING TESTS

**And Denies Projectile Dropped
on Battleship Washington
Pierced Its Deck.**

TINKER'S STORY REJECTED

**Committee Strikes Out Testimony
on the Roma's Helium and At-
tack on Gen. Mitchell.**

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26.—Rear Admiral Hilary P. Jones, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the General Board of the Navy, told the House Aircraft Committee during testimony on naval aviation today that the Philippines could be taken easily, but he refused to admit that it could be done in two weeks, as asserted by Brig. Gen. William Mitchell, Assistant Chief of the Army Air Service.

In several other particulars the Admiral ran counter to assertions of the Flying General, but he showed almost enthusiastic support for aviation. At one time, when asked if he thought that airplanes are necessary to the navy, he replied:

"Oh, my dear sir, yes. They are indispensable."

Admiral Jones was the first of the witnesses to be heard when the committee reopened its hearings today. He was asked to supplement the special report prepared by the General Board on Aviation. After the conclusion of his testimony, announcement was made that Secretary of War Weeks would be called to appear Saturday morning. Rear Admiral Sims is due to take the stand tomorrow.

Tinker's Testimony Assailed.

Representative Prall of New York wants to question Secretary Weeks as to the difference in statements between him and General Mitchell as to the number of available airplanes. This afternoon Clifford A. Tinker of New York was examined as to a magazine article in which he blamed Congress for failure to provide helium for the dirigible Roma, which was destroyed in 1921. In the course of his statement Mr. Tinker criticized General Mitchell and offered data, which the committee regarded as "hearsay." After a warm session, during which his testimony was assailed by Representative Prall as "unreliable," the material was stricken from the record, and the committee voted not to hear Mr. Tinker further.

The committee decided to accept the invitation of the Secretary of War to attend the demonstration of anti-aircraft guns at Fortress Monroe, March 6.

Admiral Jones was questioned at length about reductions in naval aviation which, Representative Prall declared, amounted to one-third, while other arms of the service were not so dealt with.

A direct question by the New York member asking the Admiral if he knew whether the President had ordered the reduction or not brought a negative reply. Admiral Jones said he did not know how it took place.

The reference to the Philippines came later when Representative O'Sullivan of Connecticut propounded a series of questions as to islands from which airplanes of a foreign power could attack the United States. Bermuda was the first mentioned, with the explanation that there was no equipment there for attack. From Cuba, it was stated, it would be possible to fly to Florida. Jamaica was the next named.

"Could an airship fly from Jamaica to the Canal Zone?" Admiral Jones was asked.

"Yes, it could fly there," Admiral Jones said.

Formosa, a Japanese possession, was next referred to as a place from which flight could be made to parts of Luzon in the Philippines. Mr. O'Sullivan asked as to whether it would be possible for a foreign power to take the Philippines by air.

"I don't think they could take them by air alone," Admiral Jones said. He added a moment later that he thought it would require a fleet and air attack. "We are better off in the Philippines than a lot of people think," the Admiral declared. "They could be taken, of course."

"In two weeks?" Mr. O'Sullivan asked.

"Two weeks is a pretty short time," Admiral Jones answered, "to get them and dig in. I would not like to say what time it would take."

Says the Islands Are Vulnerable.

"But they are very vulnerable," it was suggested.

"Oh, yes," he said.

Admiral Jones said it would be difficult for hostile airplanes to attack the United States from their home bases, the distance being so great as to make such an attack not really serious.

Called upon particularly to answer questions as to the relative importance of airplanes in the naval scheme, Admiral Jones defended the special report of the General Board.

"If we could be assured that we would have no trouble within the next ten years," he said, "we would know how to prepare for a possible war. But under the present circumstances it is the opinion of the board that all units of the navy, aircraft included, should be

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Patrick Brett O'Sullivan (D-CT)

AIRCRAFT CANNOT TAKE PHILIPPINES

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improved simultaneously, not one to the detriment of the other."

The witness asserted that the American Navy, in number and tonnage of capital ships, is fully up to the 5-5-3 ratio of the Washington arms conference. "But we are woefully weak in airplane carriers, the only other craft limited by the treaty," he added.

Representative Prall asked if he thought a 2,000-pound bomb dropped from the air would destroy a battleship, one of the points that had been made by General Mitchell.

"If it were not an armor-piercing shell I think its effect would be local," Admiral Jones said. "It might do some destruction to exposed personnel, and might have a serious effect on local fire control installation. But I do not think it would have a serious effect on the motive power, the turrets or the personnel in enclosed places."

He said that the effect would probably be very serious if the bombs were dropped alongside within ten feet of the vessel.

The questioning turned to the tests on the battleship Washington. Admiral Jones stated that two 1,400-pound armor piercing, non-explosive bombs were dropped, and that while one hit the deck, it did not go through.

"The object," the witness explained, "was to test the resistive qualities of the deck protection. It was not to give aircraft a chance to destroy a battleship."

"Then there can be no criticism of aircraft during that test," he was asked.

"No, not at all," the Admiral replied. Asked if he did not think to have sunk the Washington from the air would have been of value, he stated that it would not because information about bombing was obtained in 1921.

Defends Bombing Test Officers.

"Let me say here," he continued, "that certain people in the press have repeatedly impugned the honor of the navy officers who conducted the test on the German ship Ostfriesland. This has been done time and time again, and it is unfair. Why, heavens, if anybody knows whether aircraft can put a battleship out of commission the navy would want to know, for our very existence would depend upon it. We are of the opinion that the battleship is dominant."

Mr. O'Sullivan asked if the navy was afraid that a bomb would sink the Washington.

"Absolutely not," the Admiral said. "He told the committee that he had been informed by the Secretary of the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics that in an emergency, it would be possible to get quantity production of airplanes in six months."

Representative Prall brought up the question of the extent of the reduction in naval aviation. After the first esti-

mate of \$32,000,000, the amount requested by the Bureau of Aeronautics, the request was reduced to \$16,000,000, with \$1,000,000 authorized. Subsequent to the report on aviation from the special board, there were supplemental estimates for \$3,000,000, making a total of \$19,000,000.

"No other activity in the navy was cut one-third," Mr. Prall said.

Admiral Jones pointed out that the cruiser recommendations had been practically all reduced.

"There may have been a good reason for the one-third reduction," Mr. Prall commented, "but it seems to me that a cut of one-third was abnormal."

"How they work things out I don't know," Admiral Jones observed. He did not think the reduction had been too heavy.

It was shown that of the total estimates for the navy of \$32,000,000, the estimates as finally submitted to Congress call for \$289,000,000, with an additional authorization of \$4,000,000 for aviation.

Mr. Prall said that the responsibility rests upon the department, and that it was evident that Congress had not reduced the sums to a great extent.

Before the budget was established, Admiral Jones stated, liberal appropriations for aviation were recommended.

Mr. Prall said further that the records would show that neither the departments nor Congress was responsible for the cuts.

"Congress can defend itself," Admiral Jones continued. "I know the Navy and War Departments have tried to get what they could for aviation."

"Probably somebody does not understand the requests as well as the departments themselves," Mr. Prall added.

"They know pretty well," Admiral Jones commented.

American Submarines Outraged

With regard to submarines, the Admiral stated that those of the United States compare fairly well with those of England, Japan and other countries, but he pointed out that the other countries are building longer range submarines than this country possesses.

A recent statement accredited to Admiral Fullam, in which he asked for a "three-plane" navy, advocating preparedness in the air, under the water and on the surface, was discussed. Admiral Jones said that he "would not class him as an expert on modern naval matters."

With regard to his own experience with aviation, the witness pointed to a feat under his own direction when eighteen planes were flown from Hampton Roads to Panama and back. Admiral Jones said he insisted on the planes taking this test, and, while he was not a pilot, the ships were moved under his command. Airplanes, he agreed, will increase the operating efficiency of the navy and its offensive power.

He was asked as to what distance away the charges were set which were exploded off-side the battleship Washington, but declared that he would rather not reveal that, as it was a confidential matter.

Captain Aaron Bradshaw Jr. told the committee that actual war conditions would prevail as nearly as possible during the tests at Fortress Monroe next week. He was asked how many guns it would take to defend New York, but said that he could not answer, as the question is being worked on now. At present 139 anti-aircraft guns are in use, and 166 more are available for training purposes.

The statement of Clifford A. Tinker

resulted in a sharp tilt with members of the committee.

During his remarks, which were later ordered out of the record, he said, in part:

"General Mitchell would have the country believe that the Army and Navy Air Services have little or nothing to show for the expenditure of \$433,000,000 appropriated by Congress since the Armistice, and that the reason for this is that the existing system is wrong. He has made the statement that the Army Air Service has only nineteen first-class airplanes with which to meet an enemy attack."

"Now, General Mitchell has been assistant chief of army aviation following his return from Europe. In that capacity he, above all others in the Army Air Service, has been responsible for the expenditure of funds for the procurement of aircraft. If his statement that the Army Air Service has but nineteen first-class airplanes with which to meet an enemy is true, then, in my opinion, he convicts himself out of his own mouth as incompetent, inefficient and wasteful in the expenditure of the Government funds."

"Notwithstanding this, he seeks, through the creation of a united air force, to become a marshal of the air in order to give full sway to the extension of incompetency, inefficiency and extravagance in the expenditure of funds appropriated for the development of naval aviation, the Air Mail Service, the regulation and development of civil air navigation, and all other Governmental activities in aviation."

"I am reminded of the Biblical story where the master said to the steward: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over little things I will give thee charge over many things.' But times have changed. It appears that the master should have said: 'Well done, thou self-seeking and wasteful servant; because thou has been faithless over little things, therefore will I give thee charge over many things.'"

"While General Mitchell may charge, or admit, that the Army Air Service has little or nothing to show for its share of the \$433,000,000 expended for aviation since the armistice, the navy has no such confession of failure to report. On the contrary, I am proud of our record of achievement in the development of aviation for naval purposes. I am frank to say that I regard the technical problems involved in the development of naval aircraft as more difficult than are the problems in the development of army aircraft. The difference is that the navy has attended to business, has tried honestly to solve its problems, and is not concerned with offering excuses for failures nor with trying to reform the other service."

"If General Mitchell and his followers in the Army Air Service had been half as diligent and attentive to duty in the development of army aviation as the navy has been in the development of naval aviation, General Mitchell would not be in a position to confess the failures that he has confessed. There would have been less time for politics and propaganda, and more results."

Mr. Tinker was interrupted by Representative Prall when he began to read some of the accomplishments of the navy. Mr. Prall insisted that the testimony should bear upon the magazine story in which Congress was criticized for lack of funds to provide helium for the Roma. A letter was produced by Representative Reid showing that approximately \$1,000,000 was available for helium before the Roma was destroyed. When Mr. Tinker could not substantiate his statements, as Representative

Prall put it, he was severely criticized. Mr. Prall declared that in his judgment the story "was unreliable, unfair and untrue."

Tinker's Story on the Roma.

With regard to the Roma, Mr. Tinker said:

"I learn from the press that I have been accused by a member of this committee of stating an untruth in a magazine article published in Collier's Magazine on Jan. 24, 1925, in which I stated that Congress was responsible for the loss of thirty-four lives, due to the failure to provide for the transportation of helium from Fort Worth, Texas, to Langley Field, Va. The circumstances surrounding this case are as follows:

"In October, 1921, I returned from Europe with the bodies of our naval men killed in the ZR-2 accident. I advised that that airship be filled with helium and flown to Washington to show Congress the great advantages of helium over hydrogen, inasmuch as Congress was discouraged with airship development. My recommendations were carried out and the C-7 was flown to Washington on Dec. 5, 1921, the first airship to be filled with helium."

"About this time the Roma was placed in commission—a second-hand ship which had been dismantled in Italy, packed in the hold of a steamer and re-assembled in the United States. Necessarily, her fabric was damaged in transit and the Ansaldo motors with which she was originally equipped were replaced by Liberties, and her speed increased beyond the limit which the structure of the ship would stand."

"I was invited by General Mitchell to take a trip on the Roma and told him that I would do so if she were filled with helium. He stated that funds were not available. I was further invited to take a trip on the Roma by Major Van Nostrand, who at that time, I believe, was in charge of lighter-than-air developments in the army. I gave him the same condition—that I would gladly take a trip on her if they would fill her with helium, and I figured out at the time that sufficient helium could be transported from Fort Worth to Fort Arthur, Texas, where it would be taken on a navy ship and transported to Hampton Roads, the cost of transportation and handling to be \$14,000. Major Van Nostrand assured me that they had no funds for the purpose. In fact the Fort Worth plant was closed down for lack of funds, and was not opened again until August, 1922."

"I advised Major Van Nostrand not to take the Roma out of her hangar; it would be dangerous to do so. I called on the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation of the House of Representatives and plead with him to supply the money for the transportation of helium, and was told that Congress was not interested in lighter-than-air."

"In the meantime, the ship was put into operation, and on Feb. 21, 1922, met with disaster, killing thirty-four men. The accident would have happened had she been inflated with helium, but the loss of life from the burning of the hydrogen would not have taken place. The inability of Congress to function in this matter, I believe to be responsible for the great loss of life. This was my personal opinion based on the facts and I have stated this opinion in writing in Collier's magazine, also in an interview in The Washington Star, given on the date of the disaster, and also in another interview with The New York Times on the following day."