

DEFENSE FUMBLING LAI TO PRESIDENT

Wickenden Says Roosevelt Seems Unable to Delegate Any Authority to Responsible Subordinates.

Cleveland, May 31 (A. P.).—The chairman of the general production group of OPM's priorities division declared today: "The President seems unable to delegate any major responsibility for defense planning and co-ordination to others of proved administrative capacity, in whose political and economic views he has confidence."

Dr. W. E. Wickenden, who is president of the Case School of Applied Science here, also told an alumni gathering:

"All in all, there are eighteen civilian defense agencies, apart from the army and the navy and from the regular departments of the Government, which include a personnel of nearly 130,000 and which have no other co-ordinating head, short of the President himself.

"Our apparent fumbling and especially our dependence on improvisation in planning and execution, are in striking contrast to the long and precise preparations of the totalitarian Powers."

Dr. Wickenden continued:

"Political Washington, it seems, is far better equipped to make ringing pronouncements to the world than to make a blue-print of this gigantic task the dimensions of which it can scarcely guess.

Enemies of Industry.

"Our leaders are in a tough spot, with an unfinished social revolution on their hands, with the isolationist policies of two decades to reverse almost overnight, with Government credit already burdened by an unprecedented debt, and with most of the key posts filled men unfriendly to industry and committed to the principle that labor can do no wrong.

"It is not easy to convert this organization into one for out-producing the world. We are still trying to grow a defense head on a New Deal body and tail. Co-ordination is lacking and the tail seems at times to be wagging the dog. . . .

"Engineers are not only alarmingly scarce, they are only slightly replaceable. Others can be

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trained quickly in particular technical skills, but some of the most acute bottlenecks are in the realm of efficient management."

Suggesting "the sort of management which starts by visualizing the end result in terms of form, type, quality, quantity and time, then working back" would have "saved incalculable confusion, delay and expense if it would have been applied to our huge procurement program," Dr. Wickenden added.

"A recent co-ordinating check on the program for a single major military item revealed that a particular plan for equipping and operating plant would not only have saved large numbers of precious tools for other uses, but would actually have made it possible to complete the whole program a year sooner."