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CHARLESTON THE ONLY SITE
FOR NAVY YARD IN SOUTH

Helm Commission So Reports to Senate After Thorough Investigation of Advantages Offered Various Ports for First Class Yards

Washington, Feb. 8.—Charleston offers the only site for a first class navy yard between Hatteras and Key West, in the opinion of the commission on navy yards and naval bases. The commission's sixth preliminary report, submitted to the Senate today, also concludes that all sites on the Gulf are "remote from waters bordering on the Windward Islands and the Caribbean sea, where it is thought future naval hostilities are likely to take place," but this conclusion is qualified.

The commission reported that it seems quite "possible that the fleet's communication with Northern yards and resources might be interrupted, and in this event a base of supply, with ample docking and repair facilities on the Gulf of Mexico might become of vital importance, notwithstanding such distance."

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The commission reported that hurricanes along the Atlantic and Gulf coast would be detrimental to navy yards and believes that storms of recent years would have damaged even the largest ships. But even had a suitable location for a first class yard been decided upon its establishment would not be necessary now as the commissioners believed the Charleston plant could take care of all work the navy needs in these waters.

"From a study of strategical requirements," the report continues, "the commission is led to believe that the first line of special defense for the Gulf of Mexico should be in the Florida straits and the Yucatan channel. An operating base will be necessary for submarines, destroyers, auxiliary vessels and aircraft assigned to these localities. Key West seems to be better located strategically for this purpose than any other site available. It will be necessary to construct an artificial harbor for vessels based there as protection against hurricanes.

Headed by Helm

The commission, headed by Rear Admiral Helm, investigated proposed aircraft, submarine and destroyer bases in the past four months and reported on several available sites. It is practicable to have a coastal air station at Brunswick, Ga.; Miami offers a good "strategic location for a temporary operating base for submarines and destroyers" for protection of the Florida straits, and the same is said of Key West, except that it would afford protection on the gulf.

Tampa, St. Andrews Bay, Fla., and Mobile, were cited as being good locations for aircraft stations, but not suitable for submarine or destroyer bases. It is reported that Sabine Pass is "not very good" for aviation purposes, but that a station might be established there if necessary.

The commission was appointed to study conditions on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts, and already had reported on several sites. It is planned to complete the work after trips to the canal zone and the Windward islands.

AMERICANS UNSAFE
IN PETROGRAD

No Tidings From Ambassador Francis Causes Uneasiness in Washington

Washington, Feb. 8.—The United States government is without official knowledge concerning the whereabouts of David R. Francis, American ambassador to Russia.

Unconfirmed reports that the ambassador and his staff, with diplomatic representatives of the Entente Allies, are en route to Sweden under a Bolshevik order of expulsion, were forwarded to the state department today from the American legation at Stockholm.

No word has been received direct from the ambassador himself since a message dated at Petrograd February 4. This communication, which consumed four days in transit, contained nothing to indicate that the ambassador was prepared for an order of dismissal from the Russian foreign office. For this reason the state department is not inclined to accept the Stockholm report as accurate. Entente embassies in Washington, which have been in close touch with the state department on all Russian developments, also are lacking confirmation.

At the same time events have been shifting so rapidly in the Russian capital in recent weeks that it was regarded in official quarters as by no means certain that Francis is not on his way to the border. In common with other diplomats at Petrograd, the American ambassador has a free hand to leave at any time conditions appear intolerable. There have been several threats of late against his life. Bolshevik extremists, their suspicions encouraged by Trotsky, the foreign minister, have accused Francis of holding reactionary sympathies. Buchanan, the British minister, as well as the representative of France, were ordered home some weeks ago on similar grounds.

Stockholm reports rumors that come over the border of all forms of demoralization rampant at Petrograd. Looting is said to be general throughout the city and it is declared that much blood has been spilled in clashes between the pillagers and the Red Guard. Banks have been taken over by commissaries of the government. Armed guards are in possession of the counting rooms with experienced clerks handling the books because the regular clerks have gone on strike. In Francis' latest report he tells of

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an order having been issued providing that no one shall withdraw more than \$15 a week from the bank. Whether this applied to the ambassador was not made clear. It is estimated at the state department that there is something less than

200 Americans in Petrograd, a majority of them being American Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. workers, clerks or American banking agencies and employees of the Singer Sewing Machine company, which maintains a large branch there.

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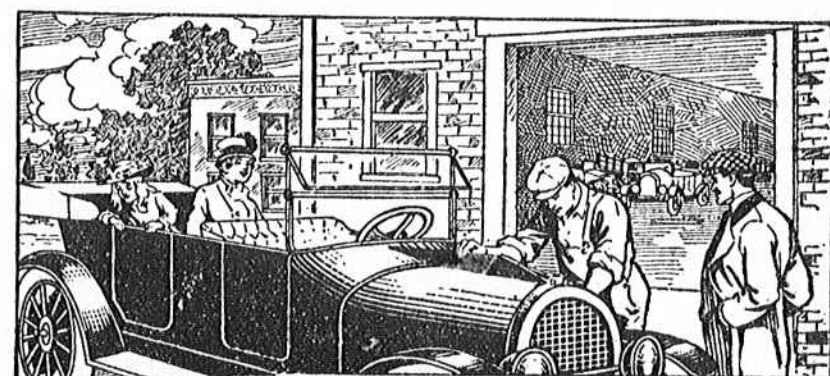
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