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THE KILGORE BILL¹

By Dr. VANNEVAR BUSH

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

As I promised in my letter of August 18, I am now writing you a further letter in regard to S. 702. It is a long letter, for I have commented not only on the bill itself, but also more broadly on the general subject, in the attempt to give you my thoughts in a constructive manner. These comments apply not only to S. 702 but also to its companion bill, H.R. 2100, which was introduced by Mr. Patman on March 5, 1943, and was referred to the House of Representatives Committee on Patents.

This problem that we both have been studying is exceedingly important. Since it may well involve the future health, comfort and safety of this nation to an extraordinary degree, its importance warrants all the effort which you and your committee have been devoting to it.

It has two phases. One is the appropriate organization of science and technology for the prosecution

of the war. The second is the corresponding problem in times of peace.

In my opinion, these two phases can not be treated as a unit. In times of war this great democracy does many things that are aimed at a relatively brief intense effort. We centralize authority, subject ourselves to rationing and restraints and send our sons to fight under the necessary rigors of military organization. Events have already shown that a democracy which thus girds itself for war can contend successfully with the most rigid of totalitarian states. In fact, it can overcome them, for the resourcefulness, initiative and self-reliance which are engendered in a people by the privileges of democracy, when marshalled under a temporary authoritative war organization, can surpass by far the performance of any permanently regimented people in the complexities and technicalities of modern war. We have already proved this in Africa, in the Far East and over Europe, and we will prove it again and again as the war progresses.

¹ Letter to the Honorable H. M. Kilgore, United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

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