

SCIENCE

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REORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT¹

THERE is one problem of the new administration that has received the attention and thought of the organized engineers of America for many years past. This is the problem of the reorganization of the federal government. The inadequacy, the wastefulness, and the inefficiency of our federal organization was evident enough under pre-war conditions. These inadequacies, these inefficiencies, these wastes were exhibited to the country during the war at the cost of millions.

Congress has placed the problem in the hands of a very able congressional joint committee. But if this joint committee succeeds in securing the imminently necessary results it will only be by full insistent support to it by public opinion. Many attempts have been made at reorganization before but all of them have gone to the same crematory—the interminable differences in opinion among the executive and legislative officials over details.

To any student of federal organization, one sweeping and fundamental necessity stands out above all others, and that is that the administrative units of the government must be re-grouped so as to give each of the great departments more nearly a single purpose. The hodge-podge of aims in certain administrative branches is scarcely believable when we consider our national pride and skill in organization. Such functions as public domain, public works, assistance to veterans, public health functions, aids to navigation, to industry, to trade, purchasing of major supplies, are each and every one scattered over from four to eight departments, most of which are devoted to some other major purpose.

¹ Summary of an address by Mr. Herbert Hoover, made at the dinner given in his honor by the Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, April 16.