

CONGRESS PROBES EXPENDITURES IN TRAINING SCHOOLS

Claim Little Control Has Been
Exercised Over New
Department.

BY LOUIS LUDLOW.
(News-Times Washington Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 24.—Much derogatory comment is heard around congress over recent sensational disclosures of the prodigious expense involved in conducting the army vocational system, and particularly over the extravagance and waste resulting from the way the work has been carried on.

Members of congress say that the disclosures so far show that practically no control has been exercised in the issue of valuable equipment and supplies for those purposes, and it is estimated, for example, that requisitions for signal corps equipment alone for vocational educational purposes cover quantities of a value of about \$55,000,000 on the basis of war costs under contracts that could not now be duplicated.

Requisitions Were Whims. It is asserted that requisitions for equipment and supplies have been sent in from the training centers in accordance with the whims of those concerned with the training, without regard to the military situation generally and without the coordination of the general staff or of any other instrumentality that would have opportunity to conform the process to a uniform system. Those upon whom the requisitions have been made have not been permitted, it is claimed to exercise their judgment as to whether they properly might be filled.

It is required by an order issued by the secretary of war on Dec. 31, last, that "material, stock, supplies and equipment required for vocational and educational training in the army will be issued upon requisitions submitted by the commanding officers of posts, camps and stations from any material.

stock, supplies or equipment on hand in the army, (including that held in reserve for possible expansion) if not required for immediate military use.

The clause "if not required for military use" has been held to mean everything not under requisition for another purpose. Thus, if vocational requisitions received at a depot on one day cover all supplies of a certain kind on hand, those supplies cannot be used to fill requisitions for purely military purposes that may be received later, but before shipment is made to meet the vocational calls, notwithstanding the importance of the military requirements.

Misuse of Stocks.

As a result, it is asserted, there has been dissipation of valuable reserve stocks that maybe, and probably will be, needed for military purposes before they can be replaced. It is further declared that it will be practically impossible to replace some of the technical equipment of the most improved kind that has been sent out to train inexperienced recruits under instructors that are not always familiar with it and in whose hands it is liable to damage, when earlier and less improved equipment might have answered the training purposes just as well. The older equipment has not been supplied because the vocational training officials have requisitioned the latest types and the storage depots have had to fill them under the orders in force.

To cite one of the many examples of alleged abuse reference is made to amplifiers. They are delicate and essential parts of radio telegraph and telephone sets. Under present conditions the contractor is unwilling to run the risk of patent litigation in manufacturing additional amplifiers, as he is no longer protected by war contracts. The stock of amplifiers is about exhausted and it will be difficult to provide complete radio equipment for troops in quantities that will be required by them.

Offer Many Courses.

About 120 different courses for the general and vocational training of the enlisted personnel of the army have been provided. It is estimated by those connected with the system that the cost for the next fiscal year will be \$10,500,000. They have assured the house military affairs committee that the supplies

already taken from the army reserve stock "representing a cost of about \$20,000,000 together with the estimate for additional appropriations will enable the army to carry on vocational training successfully. The estimate of the value of reserve stocks already taken for the purpose is infinitesimal compared with estimates of those that were concerned in its production. It is only a little over one-half of the estimated value of the signal corps property converted to educational purposes, for instance. Naturally congress will want an explanation of the discrepancy.



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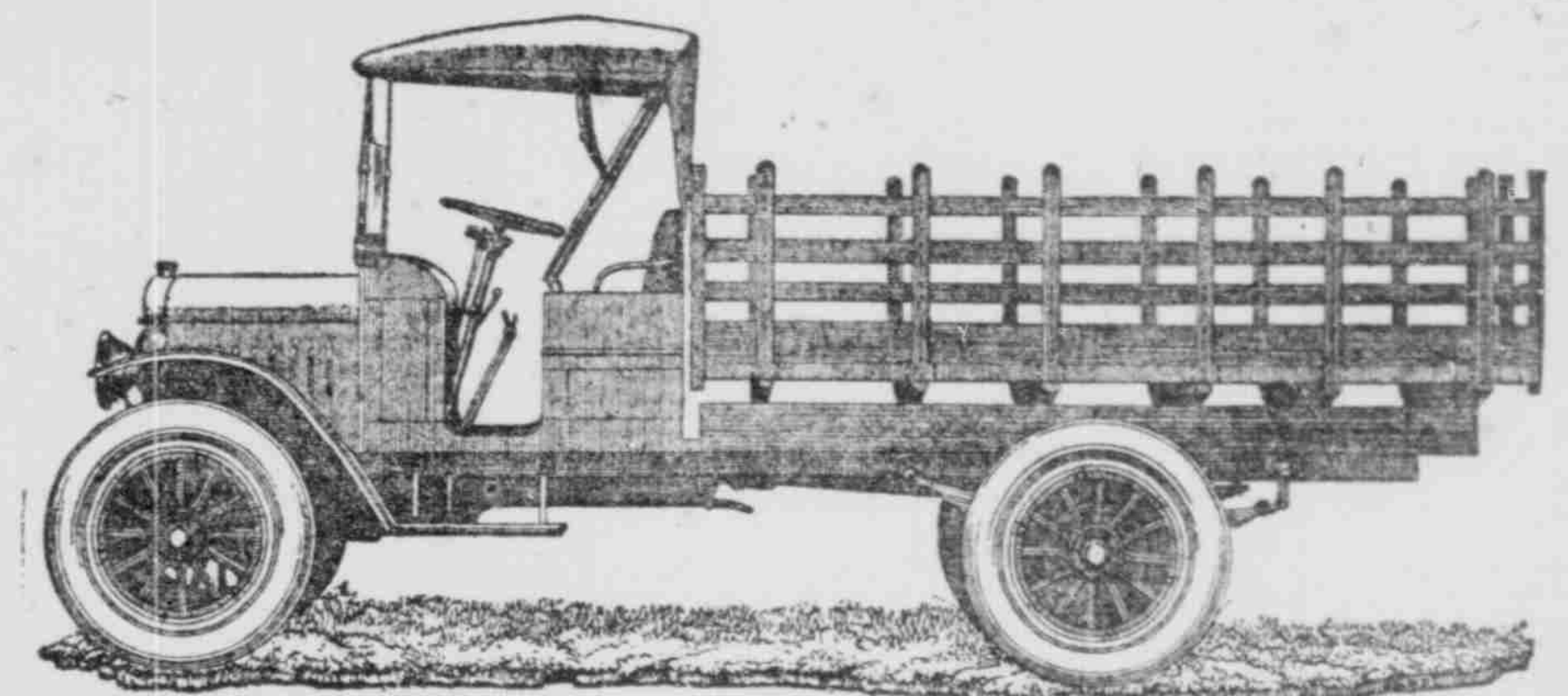
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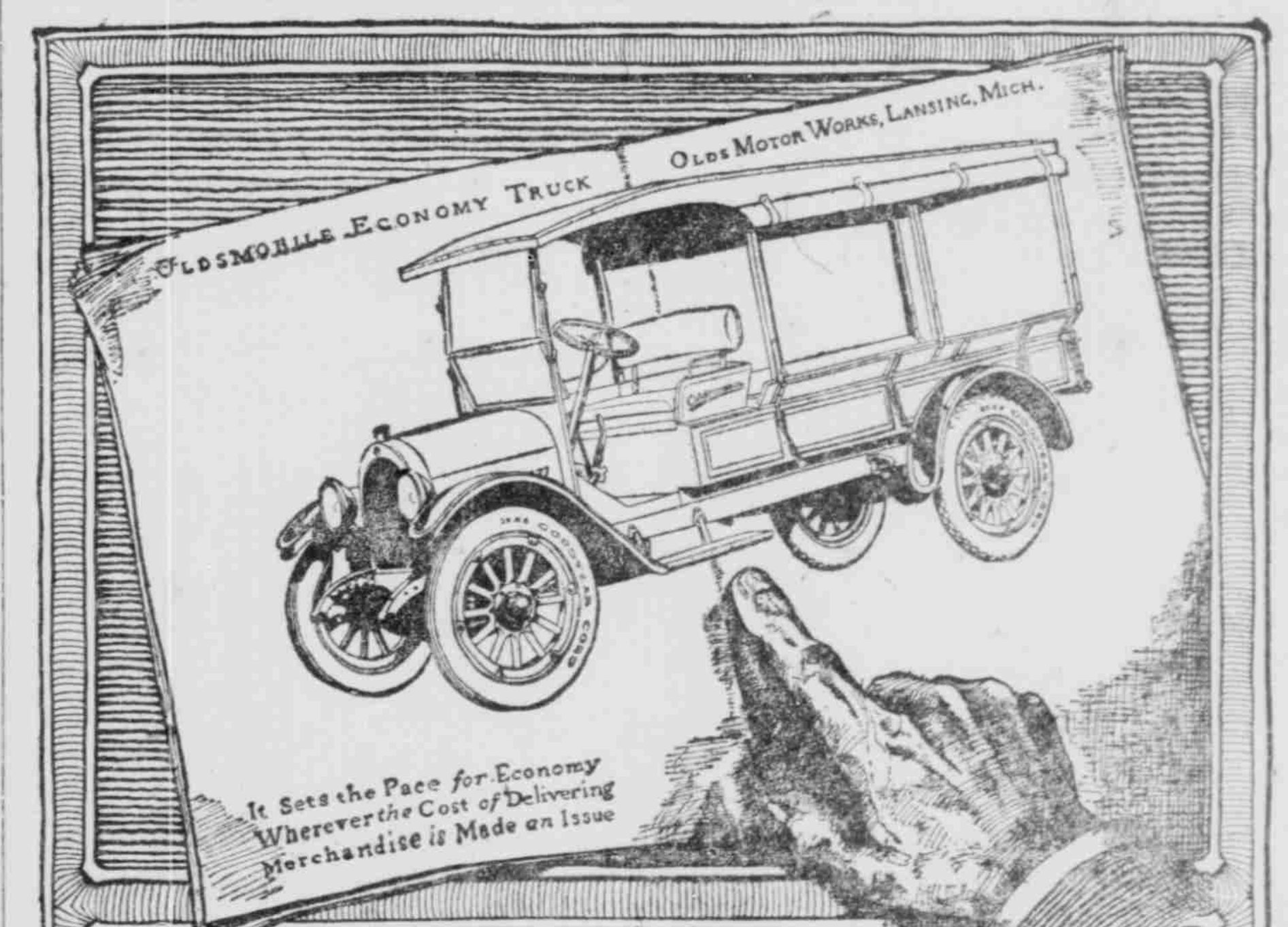
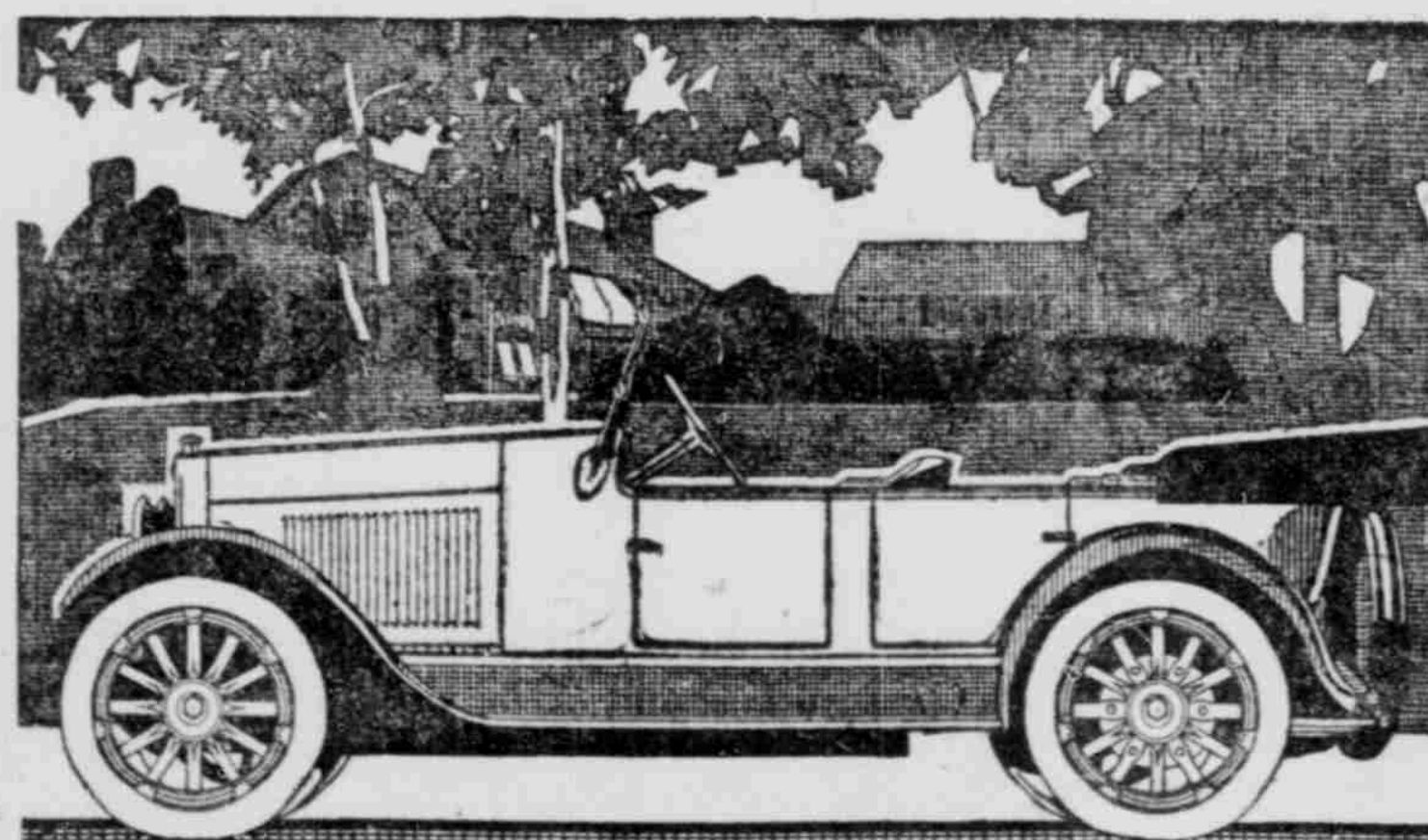
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