

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Walter Norblad April 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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April 29, 1946.

Hon. Walter Norblad,
Congressman from Oregon,
House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Norblad:--

Some weeks ago I wrote to you, asking your views on peace-time conscription, compulsory military training, etc., feeling that I had a right to know your views on such matters, since you are a candidate for re-election. I have had no reply to my inquiries, and I am wondering whether my letter went astray or you have been too busy to reply to it or you are unwilling to let your views be known or you think it of too little consequence to reply to me, or just what is the reason for my failure to hear from you.

We have been told that Congress has abandoned the idea of a permanent peace-time conscription bill until after election, but that they propose to extend the draft until the election is over, thus by indirection giving us peace-time conscription. I hope that no representative of ours will vote for such a measure. It looks like subterfuge to me. And I do not believe extension of the draft is needed either for national defence or the maintenance of occupational forces. The Conscription News, with figures based on army estimates, says that the army will have 1,070,000 men, the total estimated by the army itself as necessary, by July 1, 1947. I fear that General Eisenhower revealed the real purpose of those who favor peace-time conscription when he stated before the Senate Military Affairs Committee that he wanted conscription even if not a man were conscripted. Do we want this un-American system forced on us?

I am also much interested in food for the starving peoples of Europe and Asia, and in amnesty for political prisoners, especially those who are in prison for conscientiously refusing to participate in warfare. Is any good purpose being served by keeping in prison these men whose only crime is obedience to conscience? If you feel that there should be a proclamation of amnesty, you could advance this cause by an appeal to the president to issue such a proclamation, as Brazil, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, India and Greece have done recently.

Sincerely yours,

Levi T. Pennington.