

Disarmament Conference Letters

(Following are some of the special reports of the Disarmament Conference, in session at Washington during the past month, which were furnished by Mr. Bryan and carried by the United Press. Other phases of the Conference proceedings are discussed in the editorial columns.—Ed.)

NO SECURITY IN GUARANTEES OF FORCE

The outstanding features of yesterday were the newspaper discussion of France's attitude on guarantees and the conference committee's consideration of the Far East question. Editor Millet of the "Petit Parisien," tells his readers that the childishness of such a policy, viz: the alliance between United States and France, "is made clear by the mere fact that an alliance or any kind of an understanding involving permanent commitments is inconceivable between the United States and any power, in view of the present state of opinion in the American Senate, as well as that of the American Republic. It would be deplorable that France should appear to try to become a party in a nonexistent contract. Preposterous rumors already are being circulated in this respect, which I have been authorized to deny emphatically."

It is well to have this matter understood in the beginning. The proposed treaty between United States and France whereby the United States agreed in advance to protect her in case of attack never had any support in the United States. There never was a day when it could have received favorable consideration in the Senate, and any favor shown for it in 1919 has disappeared. It is not that the United States is less sympathetic toward France but that there is a growing conviction that guarantees of FORCE will not settle the problems which the world has to meet. That was the old plan and it brought on the bloodiest war in the world's history. There has been a tremendous reaction against war in the United States, as well as in other countries. This is shown by the refusal of congress to provide for as many soldiers in the regular army as the Secretary of War asked, by its failure to vote as much money to the navy as the Secretary of the Navy asked and by the total disappearance of the sentiment, once quite strong, in favor of universal compulsory military training. The people of the United States believe that the revolution in opinion now going on will create in France—if it has not already done so—a feeling that securities for the future ought to be found in the substitution of friendship and good will for the former methods of diplomacy and that these securities will not only be sufficient but very much more effective than those that rested upon the exciting of fear.

The Far East question will be settled along the same line as that which will furnish security to France. With the disappearance of offensive navies will come the spirit of conciliation. No one would have Japan moderate her ambition. It is ambition, individual and national, which has brought in Japan a development which has astonished the world. It would be a misfortune to the world if Japan's aspirations were diminished. There is evidence that Japan, catching the spirit of the day, is preparing to employ the larger and better methods for the extending of her influence. As China's nearest neighbor, she cannot but be interested in the latter's development. Her prosperity is interwoven with the prosperity of China's great republic. When the threat of force is abandoned and persuasion substituted for it, she will be invited to do more than she now can do by force. Japan should be to China what the United States is to the republics of Central and South America. This nation has for more than a century been next friend to South America and in all that time it has never asked for a favor or sought to compel the granting of a concession. Hence, a number of the Latin-American republics declared war on Germany as soon as the United States did. That is the spirit that ought to exist between Japan and China and that is the spirit that will exist when mutual benefit is secured by agreements.

The older nations have furnished Japan with abundant precedent for armed diplomacy but the day of such diplomacy is passed and Japan will find as great relief and as much satisfaction in adopting modern methods as any other nation. No people have shown themselves more

ready to imitate the best they could find in other nations and the best thing in the world today is the spirit of justice resting upon friendship and operating through reason. W. J. B.

PROBLEMS DISCUSSED FRANKLY

Discussion is the beginning of agreement and the time is now being spent in discussion. There is a commendable frankness in the proceedings. Recognizing the difference between a principle and a detail, the delegates are suggesting modifications which may or may not alter the principle. Two of these modifications demand consideration at the present time. First; Great Britain suggests a decrease in the submarine tonnage required and the elimination of the long-distance submarine. There is a great deal of force in this suggestion and when it is whipped into shape it will, in all probability, result in the suppression of all submarines intended for offensive purposes. As an inexpensive weapon of defense nothing has ever equalled the submarine, unless it be the bomb-dropping airplane, and it is not likely that the final agreement will weaken the DEFENSIVE power of any nation. The United States is as anxious as Great Britain to abolish every offensive weapon of war and to reduce to the lowest possible point the defensive weapons. Just as Great Britain estimates her need of ships by the extent of her empire, so a country like the United States will estimate its need of defensive weapons by the extent of the coast line which it has to protect. Japan is likely to agree with the United States in favoring a sufficient defensive armament. If the provision suggested can be confined to defensive work, there will be little objection, because no nation is likely to burden itself with unnecessary defensive preparation. It is the offensive armament that has aroused the ire of the world and this armament, whether it be on land or sea, must be put in process of extinction. The long-distance submarine embodies possibilities in the way of aggression and will be the subject of scrutiny; whether it is entirely done away with will depend upon the extent to which precaution is carried. The masses in the United States will be inclined to give the benefit of the doubt to peace and therefore favor the elimination of any weapon not absolutely necessary to defense which can be used for an attack upon the rights of any other nation.

Mr. Balfour's suggestion in regard to giving shipyards enough work to maintain the organization does not strike a responsive chord. During the war, "Keep the Home Fires Burning" was quite a popular song but "Keep the Shipyards Running" is quite a different thing. There is an obvious advantage in the maintenance of the organization but, just now, the world needs a rest. For a generation before the late war the din of the munition factories drowned the voice of conscience; now, that that conscience has asserted itself, it ought not to be drowned by the riveting of armor on battleships. To those who witnessed the impressive ceremony at Arlington, where the unknown soldier was laid to rest in the presence of the representatives of the world, nothing was more impressive than the two minutes of silent prayer. If the place of burial had been near to a shipyard, it is not likely that the authorities would have permitted the silence to be broken by hammering upon war vessels. The world needs the same stillness today in the navy yards—a quiet that will permit the world to meditate, undisturbed, upon the horrors of war and to seek the pathway that leads to universal and perpetual peace.

The naval holiday, if it is to be of value, must be real. It will be easy enough for the great nations to resume work at any time, if it ever becomes necessary to resume preparations for war, and they will all be upon an equal footing. "Peace. Be still" once calmed the sea; why not use the command to quiet the yards out of which come the ships that give to the sea a fury greater than that stirred by the deadliest storm. W. J. B.

PIONEERS OF NAVAL HOLIDAY

When the Arms Conference adjourns, if it succeeds, as now seems certain, an effort will be made by historians to distribute credit among those who have paved the way. When that time comes Argentina and Chili will be remembered as pioneers. Nineteen years ago they agreed upon a naval holiday of eighteen months—a small holiday as compared with the present and between two nations as compared with the world, but it was seed sown.

It will be remembered that Congressman Hensley of Missouri was also a pioneer. He introduced a resolution for a naval holiday.

But in a great movement like this everything

looking toward peace is aided by everything that speaks in the language of peace. Argentina and Chili launched an idea when they built upon the boundary line between the two countries an heroic statue of peace called the Christ of the Andes. The tunnel between Argentine and Chili now carries through the mountains those who formally crossed the ridge of the Andes about 2,500 feet above the level of the tunnel. It was worth climbing over the ridge to look upon this impressive symbol of peace—the Prince of Peace.

Only recently the United States and Canada joined in the building of a peace arch on the boundary between the State of Washington and British Columbia. One does not need to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy to foresee the erection of similar peace arches over all of the important thoroughfares between the two countries. Is it too much to hope that the time will come—why not soon?—When France and Germany will unite in building a peace arch on the boundary between the two countries. In Berlin a monument was built of captured cannon and in Paris they have the Arch of Triumph. An arch of peace on the boundary line will be even more glorious for, in the words of Milton, "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." W. J. B.

CHINESE QUESTION OFFERS OPPORTUNITY

China comes to the front in the discussion over the interpretation of the principle agreed upon. The most important question is whether independence in her domestic affairs means what it says or it means that the outside nations shall have a control over her custom house and its receipts. The question can only be settled in one way if independence means anything. Here is a republic exercising authority over several hundred millions of people with education increasing and the patriotic spirit developing. By what logic can outside nations demand the right to collect and apportion customs? If China cannot be trusted to collect her revenues and properly distribute them, what can she do? The old question arises, which comes first the man or the dollar? Jefferson said the man; Lincoln said the man; Roosevelt said the man. Harding said the man; that is what all the civilized nations say. The very essence of democracy is the superiority of the man over the money.

Civilization itself depends on the man's superiority; the whole trend of progress is in that direction. They used to imprison for debt; no civilized nation does that now. They still bombard cities for debt and kill innocent people for debt, but it is a waning custom and the Chinese question offers an opportunity for the adoption of a new policy. No nation can withstand public opinion; public opinion requires integrity on the part of public officials. The enforcement of international obligations can safely be entrusted to public opinion, especially if the conference creates a tribunal before which every dispute can be brought. Instead of haggling over China's right to conduct her own affairs, the leading nations might better send ambassadors to China, welcome her to full fellowship among the great nations and trust her sense of honor to compel a conscientious regard for all her obligations to the world. W. J. B.

The urge that possesses some men to paint things up leads to strange happenings. In the days before prohibition they painted up the town, and now we hear of cases where they are drinking iodine.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THINGS

What is the most important thing in the world today for men to accomplish? Many answers might be made to the question by single track minds. We mention a few of them:

The disarmament of nations and the end of war.

The triumph of the Christian religion.

The suppression of radical attacks on established economic principles.

The solution of problems disturbing capital and labor.

The universal prohibition of intoxicants.

The impartial enforcement of laws.

These are a half dozen of a score which will occur to any thoughtful person. All of them have the best efforts of great organizations in civilized nations, but none of them have the support of all men. So far as our observation extends, the Big Purpose of all men everywhere—the one thing which each individual thinks most important—is to "get along" himself, to make money, to grow rich, to secure his own ease and comfort, and—

To let the Devil take the hindmost.—Chicago Journal of Commerce.