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The Forum

To the Editor of the Nebraskan:

May I add a word to your military drill symposium?

It is surely safe to assume that your readers are opposed to war. The people who really want war, for its own sake, may easily be divided into two classes. To one class belongs the professional soldier, who frugally desires to give the country more work for his pay that present conditions permit, and who also hopes to benefit by the rapid promotion which would follow his anticipated brilliant service in the field. He surely cannot be blamed for desiring war. To the other class belongs the contractor who furnishes arms and munitions of war, and he surely cannot much be blamed for wanting business to pick up. The great majority of us, however, who might be inconveniently killed, and who feel that the third of our national income which we now spend on militarism is just about enough to pay for international burglar insurance, are desirous of seeing peace continue.

But we would not consent to even this trifling expenditure of some three hundred millions annually if we did not regard war as in some cases, a necessary evil. We regard it with abhorrence, but we tolerate it in perhaps somewhat the same spirit as we tolerate capital punishment. With this difference: We keep the gallows and the hangman pretty much out of our sight, but we parade our bayonets and gallant young prospective executioners on the athletic field with all possible publicity and approbation. The possibility of war with Mexico, or with Japan, or with Ethiopia, we say, makes it necessary that six hundred able-bodied men devote half a working day a week toward mastering the gentle art of wholesale homicide. It is because of the possibility of war, runs the pop-

ular logic, that we have trained soldiers and other armaments.

A few of us, however, hold the opinion that we have a possibility of war because we have trained soldiers and armaments; that militarism causes war rather than that war causes militarism. The civilized world long ago abandoned the notion that every man must carry weapons in order that his person might be secure. Our laws in fact forbid a man to carry his own arsenal, recognizing that the possession of arms is a temptation to use them. Even the popular logic say that whoever looks for trouble will be likely to find it. Just why this principle, which is held valid for individuals taken separately, should not apply to individuals taken collectively, is not clear. I can explain it only as superstition on the part of us who pay the \$300,000,000 a year, and

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