

The Think-Before-Fighting Plan

The Public (Chicago): The peace plan of President Wilson and Secretary Bryan has progressed sufficiently to make its early acceptance by all important nations a probability, if not a certainty. Once adopted, it may not be an absolute preventive of war; but it will certainly be a strong check. It will be greater glory to the president and the secretary of state to have taken the first practical steps toward putting an end to war, than could have come from any number of bloody victories on battlefields. It will be greater honor to the United States to be the nation that has taken the initiative in such a matter, than to be superior to all others in brute force.

The plan submitted to foreign nations by Secretary Bryan provides for investigation of international disputes by an international commission. Pending investigation and report thereon no hostilities shall occur. This gives to each nation a period for reflection, and, unless modern nations are more barbarous than generally supposed, a pause of that kind will alone be sufficient to cause a revulsion of feeling regarding the prospective war. In spite of the incentive to war, created by protective tariffs and other artificial checks on industry, it is hard to believe that any civilized nation will deliberately proceed after a period of reflection to bring the miseries of war on the citizens of even a much weaker nation, and, besides, to incur the risk of suffering some of those miseries itself. No doubt fewer wars would have taken place had there been such a plan in operation heretofore as the Wilson-Bryan measure. Six months of delay would have given heated tempers a chance to cool, and the demagogic nature of jingoistic utterances to become apparent. Public hearings before an impartial tribunal would have shown fair-minded citizens of each nation a better and more honorable way to settle the trouble than through wholesale slaughter. While it is not absolutely certain that all wars can thus be prevented, it is probable that they will be much less frequent. Besides, the predatory purposes of wars of oppression can then be no longer successfully disguised as patriotism.

Following is an Associated Press dispatch: Washington, July 14.—Denmark, through Minister Constantine Brun today became the twenty-first nation to accept the principle of Secretary Bryan's peace plan. Details of the plan already have been forwarded to Denmark. It is not expected that treaties will be negotiated embodying the principle of the plan before next fall.

Lincoln (Neb.) Journal: Mr. Bryan's peace plan goes prosperously on. That is, an increasing number of nations say they are favorably disposed. If no hammer falls into the machinery Mr. Bryan will land a Nobel peace prize first thing we know.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION

An Associated Press dispatch from Washington says: A proposal to maintain the status quo as to military and naval preparations among disputants during the period of investigation of international differences constitutes the third and final proposal in Secretary Bryan's peace plan.

In making that portion of the proposal public Secretary Bryan said that the obligation to maintain the status quo would not be obligatory in the event of danger to either of the two contracting parties from a third party. The proposal, which he submitted to the twenty nations which have accepted his plan in principle, as well as to the other nineteen nations not yet heard from is as follows:

"This government is prepared to consider the question of maintaining the status quo as to military and naval preparations during the period of investigation, if the contracting nation desires to include this, and this government suggests tentatively that the parties agree that there

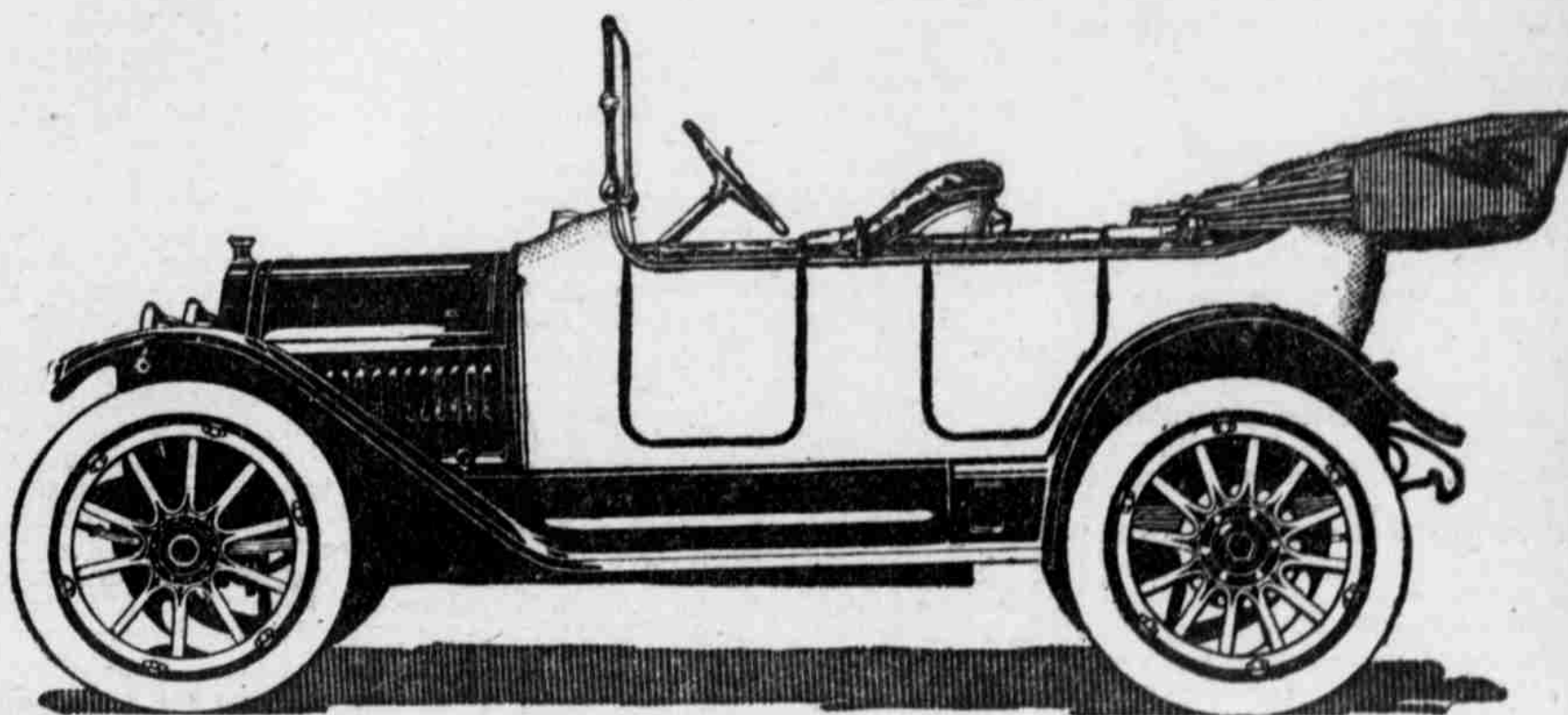
shall be no change in the military and naval program during the period of investigation unless danger to one of the contracting parties from a third party compels a change in said program, in which case the party feeling itself menaced by a third power shall confidently communicate the matter in writing to the other contracting party and it shall thereupon be released from the obligation not to change its military or naval program, and this release will, at the same time, operate as a release of the other contracting parties. This protects each party from the other in ordinary cases and yet provides freedom of action in emergencies."

The proposals previously announced provide for an international commission of five members, one from each of the contracting countries to be chosen by the government,

one to be chosen by each of the contracting countries to be agreed upon by the two contracting governments. One year is suggested as a proper time for the investigation of the subject under dispute.

"All of these suggestions," said Secretary Bryan, discussing his plan, "are presented for consideration, and not with the intention of imposing any fixed conditions. The principle of the investigation being accepted, the details are matters for conference and consideration."

The twenty nations which have accepted the principle of the peace proposal in the order named are: Italy, Great Britain, France, Brazil, Sweden, Norway, Peru, Russia, Austro-Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, Bolivia, Argentine Republic, China, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Spain, Portugal and Belgium.



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