

The "Interest" Back of Preparedness

On the 24th of November, Mr. Hudson Maxim delivered an address before the committee of 100 appointed to represent the Security league in St. Louis. (These men do not enlist to fight, they simply enlist to encourage the spending of money on preparedness). On the 26th of November the following advertisement appeared in the St. Louis papers:

"The Maxim Munitions Corporation was formed to take over the important inventions of Hudson Maxim in aerial torpedoes, bomb-throwing devices, aeroplane guns, improvements in range-finding guns, position indicators to show constantly the geological position of submarines and other vessels, improvements in periscopes and many others. Further details in this space tomorrow. Full report on application."

The following comment appears in the St. Louis Times:

"The appearance of an advertisement in St. Louis papers announcing the organization of the \$10,000,000 Maxim Munitions corporation, two days after the appearance of Hudson Maxim before the Business Men's league, and about 10 days after the appointment by Mayor Kiel of a committee of one hundred to prepare a plan whereby congress might be influenced in its army and navy program, Friday, was causing much comment among members of the committee.

"The advertisement stated that 'the Maxim Munitions corporation was formed to take over the important inventions of Hudson Maxim in aerial torpedoes, bomb-throwing devices, aeroplane guns, improvements in range-finding guns, position indicators to show constantly the geological position of submarines and other vessels, and many others.' The stock was offered for sale at \$10 a share, and further details in other advertisements Saturday were promised.

"A canvass of members of Mayor Kiel's committee of one hundred indicated the appointment of the committee, Mr. Maxim's visit and the advertisement were more than mere coincidences.

"Frederick W. Lehman, whose name has been included in the one hundred, said he intended refusing to accept the appointment. 'That's a pretty swift beginning,' he commented when his attention was called to the advertisement. 'I did not hear Mr. Maxim Wednesday, I have been away, but it always happens about like that.'

"John H. Gundlach, another member of the committee of one hundred declared that if the activities of the National Security league, the appearance of Mr. Maxim and then of the advertisement can be connected, it is treasonable. Of course, there are a lot of slick people who always want to capitalize patriotism, and whose patriotism is measured altogether by the number of dollars they get out of it. The more dollars, the more patriotism."

"An appointment to the committee of one hundred was refused by Henry S. Caulfield, it developed Friday. Mr. Caulfield said he had to decline the honor because he was 'tied up in so many things.'

"When any man connected with the manufacture of munitions declares himself for war, one can not help thinking he has some ulterior motive,' Mr. Caulfield said. 'I am for adequate national defense, of course, but I believe we ought to confer with some authority who will not profit by war, or who is not connected with the manufacture of munitions of war.'"

COURAGE, PHYSICAL OR MORAL

E-President Roosevelt is out in a letter in which he describes the position of the administration as cowardly because it does not enter the present war. Mr. Roosevelt represents a group of Americans, small in number but loud of voice, who are abnormal on the subject of war. They take counsel of their physical cour-

Who shall draw the line on the question of "adequate preparedness" -- the taxpayers or the manufacturers of war implements?

age and know no kind of glory except that which comes with brutish exultation over feats accomplished by brute force. Mr. Roosevelt is the only member of this group who has reached political prominence. Most of them do their talking at the prize fight ring or in other places remote from the centers of political influence. Mr. Roosevelt stands alone in one respect; no other prominent American has ever approached him in love of power for power's sake or in blood-thirstiness. In the Armory in London there is an imitation flower made from the blades of swords. They call it the Passion flower. If Mr. Roosevelt's breast was large enough for it this would be his favorite flower, but not being able to wear it on the outside, he carries its image in his heart. He is a human arsenal, a dreadnaught wrought in flesh and blood. His spear not only "knows no brother," but it knows no rest. Parliamentary reform is too slow—changes must be brought about at once and only the hand of force has rapidity enough to suit him. The last two years have been worm wood and gall to him. He has been condemned to the languor of peace when he saw a chance for war—first with Mexico and later with Europe. He has had but two happy moments; one when he thought that the taking of Vera Cruz might lead to intervention in Mexico, and the other when he thought that the sinking of the Arabic might lead to our entry into the European war.

Those who look for evidence of divine guidance in the affairs of men will attribute his defeat in 1912 to a kind Providence. How fortunate for the country that he is not in position to direct the policy of the nation! How fortunate, too, that he does not mold the opinion of the future!

The United States is right in putting moral courage above physical courage. Man shares physical courage with the beast, while moral courage is that which gives the highest proof that he was made in the image of God. If Mr. Roosevelt's moral courage approached his physical courage in quantity or quality, he might have rendered an enormous service. As it is he is a warning to his generation, rather than an inspiration. He is a red light, a signal of danger, and not a flame that illumines the path in which his countrymen walk. W. J. BRYAN.

THE NAVY LEAGUE CREED

Extracts from an article in the Seven Seas, Navy League organ, September, 1915:

"The true militarist believes that PACIFICISM is the masculine and HUMANITARIANISM is the feminine manifestation of national DEGENERACY."

"To adopt German standards of militarism would of course be impossible among Anglo-Saxons, but this does not minimize the fact that WORLD-EMPIRE is the only LOGICAL and NATURAL aim for a nation that really desires to remain a nation; * * *"

"LAND has always been the correct ALIMENT for nations and never till the arrival of the Pacificist did gods or men ever witness a nation trying on strait-waistcoats as if they were life preservers."

The woman suffragists polled more than 500,000 votes for their amendment in New York state alone at the November election. The man who thinks that such a result on the first submission of the question in the stronghold of the liquor interests and special privileges contains anything discouraging must have a very poor conception of values.

The Road to Peace

(Written for the Scripps-McRae papers.)

No one can do more than guess in regard to the time when peace will come, or as to the means by which it can be hastened.

One phase of the subject has not been sufficiently considered, namely, the RIGHT of the neutral nations to bring moral pressure to bear upon the belligerents to state the terms upon which peace can be restored. The Hague convention expressly declares that an offer of mediation shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act. On the contrary, it is specifically encouraged on the ground that humanity, as a whole, is interested in stopping a war.

But the right of the neutral nations to urge peace rests on the ground of material interest as well as on the ground of humanity. They are bearing burdens of taxation which would not be necessary but for the war; domestic questions are being subordinated to issues raised by the war; every neutral nation is in danger of being dragged into the war and some are almost forced into it. In each nation the financial vultures who live on the woes of their country are using the war as an argument in favor of increased expenditures on preparedness. Why should the nations at war obstruct the highways of the world, interfere with neutral trade and endanger the lives of those who travel? All the neutral nations suffer, and those who suffer have a right to complain. The President proposed mediation immediately after the war began, but that was sixteen months ago. I regret that he does not see his way clear to make the offer again. The smaller nations wait on this nation and I fear the President has been deceived as to the wishes of the people.

There are big corporations in this country that are financially interested in the continuance of the war—corporations that sell ammunitions at an enormous profit and corporations that float war loans at a high rate, and these corporations speak through metropolitan newspapers.

The masses have no voice, except as they speak through officials elected by them or through petitions. They should communicate immediately and frequently with their representatives.

In politics the fear of the people is the beginning of wisdom; the people can easily control congress if they will only speak to congress in sufficient numbers.

Peace voyages like that upon which Mr. Ford and his companions have embarked are an indication of a growing desire that something shall be done. The question is not whether Mr. Ford's plan will meet with immediate success—time only can answer that question. The real question is whether it deserves success, and to this question every one who desires peace must answer "yes." It can do no harm,—it has already done good. It has started people to talking about peace here and in Europe—that is so much gained—and it has exposed to contempt the sordid interests that ridicule all talk of peace. Then, too, there is an inspiration in the earnestness and unselfishness of a man of large wealth who is controlled by his heart instead of his pocket-book.

Health and safety to those who sail; they are in search of something more precious than the golden fleece—success attend them!

W. J. BRYAN.

AGAINST "PREPAREDNESS" BUT FOR MERCHANT MARINE

Bickleton, Wash., Nov. 23rd, 1915.—W. J. Bryan, Washington, D. C. Dear Sir: We held a large Farmers union last night and took a vote on Wilson's "preparedness," or, rather, on the Defense bill, and not a vote was in favor of that plan. We then took a vote on "Merchant Marine," and the entire house rose up, showing great enthusiasm for merchant marine. That is what we want, and not war. I would like to see you work for that merchant marine. Respectfully yours, (signed) A. M. Criswell, pres. Farmers' Union.

(The Commoner is supporting the Ship-Purchase bill.—Editor.)

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