

ing of these modern federalists. Strength to your arm, and may you be right in adjudging that the cry has spent itself and that henceforth the tide will be the other way.

John P. Schoelerman, Monte Vista, Colo.: A vote of this district went 80 per cent against preparedness, as near as I can remember. We don't need it, and the people can not be humbugged into it.

A Commoner reader, of Ky., writes: Humanity, I think we will agree, is above "honor," because it includes honor, if for no nobler reason. The congressional muss over travel rights—"rights" (!) when we are all so-journers at the great Inn—brings out an equal fallacy, ignoring the rights to peace of a hundred for the right to travel of the one.

But the hundred have another right ignored, a right granted them under the plain language of the federal constitution. This constitution (Art. 1, sec. 8, ch. 15, and Art. 4, sec. 4) allows no pretext for war but to "repel invasions." Nothing else. Is fighting over honor, like French duellists or German university students, repelling invasions? Othello strangled an innocent woman for honor—"Nought did I in hate but all in honor." This feudal survival is not the quality we respect in a man who keeps his word and pays his debts. Blue jays screaming bloody murder

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from their lofty perches, these honor editors always sound to me. I noticed that when their own whip-crackers burned babes to cinders in Ludlow a few years back, the heavens on the front page were serene and beautiful. I am myself a retired naval officer, and have not a thing to say against any officer of the government. I have a hole in me to show that I once took an oath to defend the constitution. I believe that the good, sound sense of the framers of that document is a thousand times better to be followed than the spirit of Coeur-de-Lion. Repel invasions. It seems to me that you pacifists are missing a point here. The gods bring threads to a web begun; threads that lead on and on into a maze of technicalities and pretexes. "Not contentment," sang Nietzsche, "but more power. Not virtue, but efficiency." Defense has become a very, very big word; rights and privileges, honor and colonies and that endless string of precedents from precedent from precedent that we dignify by the name of international law. When some speculator is nabbed trying to slip into Germany for war prices, "American Ship Seized"—from the very same sheets that have been bewailing our lack of a merchant marine! "American," yea, when they want our brown, but if she does get by and cleans up a million, we are never so necessary when they cut the melon. We might try applying the principle of the hayseed taxpayer who boarded a man-of-war, knife out, to whittle off his share. Big deviltries, sir, as you know, are never done in the name of the devil. They are done by people who believe that they are God's instruments as firmly as Americans believe that millionaires are entitled to our money. The President said at New York, February 27, that "No one seriously supposes that the United States needs to fear an invasion of its own territory." In a note to Austria, August, 1915, we laid down the sound, noble principle that the United States desires to avoid menacing the peace of the world by the threat of its army and navy. This seems to me the way to talk. Yet when we know to a certainty that 500,000,000 have failed to keep the peace by this preparedness system, good men vainly imagine that 100,000,000 must now adopt it.

J. H. Greene, M. D., Urbana, Ill.: Our President, for whom I entertain the highest respect, has come before the people on the question of preparedness. He asserts that it is essential to prepare at once against contingent enemies, nobody knows whom. If preparedness is as essential as he seems to think, he certainly ought to be logical enough to take action against those who have already declared war on the government. This would demand the immediate necessity of taking over certain munition plants.

P. J. Davenport, Abingdon, Va.: I have three girls and two boys to be cursed by turning this country into a military camp with all its brutal influences, and I am strongly in favor of the "attend-to-our-own-business" policy that has made this nation the envy of all Europe. We will have no wars with foreign countries unless we bring them on ourselves. This proposition is monstrous. Beside it all "robber tariffs," free trade, trusts, monopolies and combines sink into utter insignificance. All of them combined can't destroy our institutions half as quick as the policy our present administration is reported as advocating. It is incomprehensible to me that a so-called Christian nation, deploring what it terms German and Austrian militarism, submarine murders, and all that sort of stuff, could

at the same moment advocate a more powerful military and naval equipment than either or both of them together. And, if we drill an army and build a navy, they must be dreadful, as brutal and cruel as two or three European armies and navies combined. Nothing short of that gives us protection.

Frank Stephens, Edge Moor, Del.: I wish there were some way in which I could express to you the certainty of my conviction that you are absolutely right in your stand for Peace as against "Preparedness."

J. H. Thormann, Cincinnati, O.: The average newspapers did not permit the American public to form a true and accurate opinion of your practical foresight, but recently they see you as the only real tower of justice and strength for the good of our country and the world at large. Editorials do not sway people any more like they used to. The mentally blind have regained their independent vision. Still the enemies of peace are now working harder than ever. I meet the general public every day and feel convinced that both your political friends and foes appreciate your timely stroke of policy which kept us out of the whirlpool of bloodstained battlefields. More and more they realize that the entire world would have been turned into a slaughterhouse without hope for cessation. Senator Lodge tried to belittle George Washington on the 22nd inst. and such men demand that we sacrifice our national happiness for honor's sake when no honor is at stake. I contend that citizens who choose to travel upon a foreign ship in preference to an American ship are a dishonor to the rest of us as they ignore our flag. They should look for protection to the flag they choose in preference to ours. A flag that is good enough for them while they accumulate American dollars is good enough for them when they cross the ocean to spend some of them. May the Almighty give you strength to hold in abeyance the wish of the unscrupulous.

M. C. Stott, Boise, Ida.: I deeply appreciate the great fight which The Commoner makes in behalf of the American people as against the hungry trusts. Success to your efforts. I have followed Mr. Bryan for twenty years and have always found him to be on the side of the common people and fighting in their interest.

John Aubrey Jones, San Francisco, Cal.: I predict that, should the present congress enter upon deliberations looking to the enactment of legislation to take the profits out of "preparedness" and resultant war, by providing for government manufacture of arms, munitions and warships, the mask would be off, and the greatest beneficiaries from contracts from Uncle Sam for war-making supplies would be exposed as "preparedness" patriots (?) for revenue only, a la Hudson Maxim. For there would undoubtedly be maintained at Washington the most "insidious lobby" yet known, armed with unlimited "persuasion," to oppose, and if possible, prevent, such legislation. And this these "preparedness" shouters would do, despite the fact that the establishment and operation of government plants essential to preparedness, would be the surest guaranty that preparedness would be attained at the least cost and the minimum of risk. Wherefore it would be revealed to the people that the zeal of these patriots (?) was born very much more of a burning desire to enrich themselves at the expense of the people than to have the country actually prepared to repel armed invaders. It is earnestly to be hoped that Pres-

ident Wilson, as a "preparedness" propagandist, will not omit to advocate government manufacture of all war-making instruments and all munitions necessary to complete preparedness. For this policy operative might enable Uncle Sam to recruit an army "adequate for defense" without resorting to compulsory methods. Our patriotic yeomanry would be less averse to military services when they knew that they were enlisted to fight for Uncle Sam, and with guns and munitions made by Uncle Sam. Yes, take the private profits out of "preparedness," and its present most zealous advocates would chloroform to death the shameless sham. They would not want to pay the tax, without pocketing the profits accruing from militarism.

J. J. Sanders, Florence, Ariz.: I am "ferninst" committing our nation to any policy savoring of old world militarism. I have written my views to Senator Ashurst. Herewith find club of eight subscriptions to The Commoner.

T. B. Nash, Nash, Okla.: Since we seem determined to be prepared for war and since your other contributors have failed to mention it, I want to call your attention to one item in the program of preparedness that seems to have been overlooked; this is a supply of willow wood for artificial limbs. Recent press dispatches carry the statement that the supply of willow for this purpose has become exhausted both in Europe and America. The crippling and maiming is not half done in Europe yet and we are just getting ready to do ours. After the nation has taken a man from his home, put him in front of the enemy and had him cut down to just a torso, surely he would have a right to expect that the government furnish him enough material for an appendage or two. Gun factories and munitions plants can be erected in a little time. We can build a battleship in a year or two, but it takes time to grow a willow tree. The President says: "We should profit by our observation of the immediate present." Our most recent observation has been the exhaustion of the supply of willow, and we hope the President will give this matter careful thought. As an example to the rest of the country he could have a willow grove planted on the White House lawn. It would

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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.