

treatment of the sailor under the navigation laws of most of the nations of the earth are, so far as I have been able to study them, has always made me wonder why as many men choose a seafaring life as do; second, the question of a trained naval reserve. It is just as essential, as I said before, if we are to have a naval reserve, that we shall have trained American seamen as it is to have the vessels themselves.

If we lower the standards for the American seamen by changing our navigation laws as private capital demands, or, at least, as I understand it demands, and put the American seamen on a parity with Asiatic and European seamen, then it will be impossible to induce Americans to adopt a seafaring life. Our merchant marine would in that event be manned by Asiatics and a heterogeneous collection of all the races of the world. They would have no American national spirit and could not be depended upon to fight for our flag in case of war.

But even if the navigation laws are changed to suit private capital, and even if subsidies or subventions are granted, where can you get the

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guarantee or assurance that private capital will come forward in sufficient amount immediately to do the job so imperatively demanded for naval preparedness and for the promotion of our commerce? No such guarantee or assurance can be secured. I think it will be agreed that even after such changes were made, private capital in this country would have to be educated to them; that it would come slowly to realize that the laws were sufficiently advantageous to suit it; that even then shipping ventures would be entered upon in a small and hesitating way for a long time, and that the ultimate development of a merchant marine, through the medium of private capital, would be slow and timorous at best.

We are confronted by a situation which, because of its very necessities, demands prompt and vigorous treatment by some agency strong enough, financially and otherwise, to be effective. Think of our present opportunity, even disregarding necessities. Shall we or not grasp the marvelous opportunity we now have to extend our trade throughout the world? This opportunity will not wait. Already we have lost invaluable time; we have lost ground we can never recover. We must move swiftly if we are going to take the place in the world's markets which some of our leading industrial competitors have been forced to abandon. If we do it now we can establish ourselves so firmly that we can not be dislodged upon the return of peace.

Opportunity is never worth anything to the timid or the hesitating. It is to the strong and courageous and swift that opportunity counts. Shall we sleep while the opportunity to be the dominant financial and industrial power of the world, with all of its great moral potentialities, is trying to force itself into our indifferent grasp, or shall we, with the courage, decision, enterprise and vision which characterized our ancestors, seize this marvelous opportunity and make America a permanent, vital and irresistible force for the welfare of humanity and the progress of civilization?

This is what it will mean to the future of our country and to the part it must play in the world's history, if we have the vision, the courage and the imagination to go ahead.

ONE OF THE FOUR OF OUR GREATEST

America has four very great citizens in private life. Two of them have served in high positions and have reached the presidency and retired. Another has done great work as a railroad builder and developer, becoming immensely rich by benefiting thousands. The fourth has filled as large a place in the public mind as either and has sat in congress, has commanded a regiment and has directed the foreign policy of the nation at the cabinet table. Mr. Bryan will draw an immense audience, as one of the great American citizens, a leader and instructor. Birmingham has heard Mr. Bryan several times and always crowds any hall to hear his words.

There is no antagonism between Mr. Bryan and the president. There is no antagonism between him and any great number of people, for both the great political parties have adopted many of the ideas promulgated by Mr. Bryan during his long and remarkable political career.

Few other men have become great by presenting ideas to the public. He should be heard as an advocate of peace because peace is best for America.

It is an honor to have one of the greatest men of the age with us and to hear his words of advice. Therefore Birmingham welcomes Mr. Bryan.

an. Alabama is for peace and for a policy of peace distinctly and unmistakably. — The Birmingham (Ala) Ledger.

The Giant Stirs

[From the Johnstown (Pa.) Democrat.]

Thus far there has been little activity on the part of the anti-militarists in combating the preparedness program. Apparently they had accepted the declarations of President Wilson in his last annual message as an assurance that jingo excitement was not to sway the administration in its attitude toward militaristic aggrandizement.

But recent developments show that what was considered as fantastic when Mr. Hobson was advocating it and was dismissed with a smile, has become a serious factor in the affairs of the day. Unless checked by a popular uprising in determined protest it will dominate congress at the coming session and force it into an action which would have been deemed impossible less than twelve months ago.

While the anti-militarists have been inactive and apparently unsuspecting, the proponents of preparedness have been thoroughly alive and enormously busy. They have organized with care and with amazing celerity. In a hundred or perhaps a thousand ways they have wrought upon the imagination of the people until thousands have come to believe that the United States stands face to face with some unnamed foe. The demand for "preparedness" has therefore found a response in many quarters where it would have been rejected with scorn and derision when this sinister campaign was begun.

Whether this demand is to prevail or not depends upon what the sober conscience of the country shall do during the next few months toward clarifying the air and revealing the true inwardness of an agitation which has strangely brought to its support practically every great interest in the United States immediately or indirectly concerned in the profits which "preparedness" is certain to pour into private coffers. If the anti-militarists shall do no more than they have been doing in the way of a counter agitation the "preparedness" program will go through like a hot knife through butter.

Happily, however, the anti-militarists seem to be arousing themselves to the gravity of the situation and to the obligation which rests upon them to intervene in behalf of sanity and the higher patriotism which fears less the imaginary foe without who is represented as coveting our territory than the very real foe within who makes no concealment of his purpose to subvert the principles of the republic and to commit it to a policy that would undermine our most cherished institutions and threaten the liberties we hold most dear.

All over the country the anti-militarist forces are shaking off the lethargy which has held them and their plans are taking form. The friends of peace are bestirring themselves with a full sense of what is before them and with a determination that "preparedness" must at least submit specifications before it shall be lent the endorsement it is demanding. These specifications have thus far been carefully withheld. But before hundreds of millions are handed over to the munitions makers more definite information regarding the dangers confronting the country will be demanded by the people who are to foot the bills.

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