

The Commoner

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VOL. 16, NO. 3

Lincoln, Nebraska, March, 1916

Whole Number 683

The Preparedness Program

The tax-payers are now able to sit in judgment upon the preparedness program. The army experts ask for 500 millions for the first year and 319 millions per year thereafter. This is for the army.

The Navy board, according to Admiral Fletcher (see press dispatches printed March 9th) asks for one billion and a half to put the navy in proper shape, and then 760 millions per year thereafter to keep it up. This is not for an "incomparably" greater navy, such as the President asked for, but simply for a navy that will EQUAL any other navy afloat by 1925, and it is for a navy to equal other navies as they are NOW—not as they will be after we spur them on by our new policy.

In other words, the Army board and Navy board now demand that the annual appropriations for army and navy shall be MORE THAN QUADRUPLED, and that we shall permanently spend OVER ONE BILLION per year on army and navy. THIS IS MORE THAN TWICE THE NET INCOME RECEIVED BY ALL the farmers of the United States from all their crops—and yet the jingoes think that any man who objects to the program is a "white-livered coward."

W. J. BRYAN.

THE WARNING RESOLUTION

They have had a great excitement in congress over warning Americans to keep off armed merchantmen and, according to the press dispatches, the senate and house "stood by the President." The Gore resolution in the senate provided that passports should be denied to Americans traveling on belligerent ships—this was laid on the table, together with a substitute declaring that the killing of an American under those circumstances would be an act of war.

In the house the McLemore resolution was laid on the table—the tabling resolution declaring that the house "knows" that the President will lay the subject before the house for its action if he can not settle the matter successfully by diplomacy.

Thus ends the controversy for the time being without decisive action either way. The President asked for a free hand and complained that the discussions in congress were embarrassing him. By laying the Gore and McLemore resolutions on the table, congress POSTPONES discussion for the present, but there was no vote on the real question: "Shall an American citizen be permitted to drag his country into war by traveling upon an armed merchantman in the danger zone?"

If the President had asked the opinion of congress on this subject, an overwhelming majority in both houses would have voted "No." The PRESIDENT KNOWS THIS NOW and HE KNOWS THAT CONGRESS WILL NOT RESORT

THE MEXICAN SITUATION

President Wilson, at the close of a meeting with the cabinet March 10, dictated and made public the following statement:

"An adequate force will be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays. This can and will be done in entirely friendly aid of the constituted authorities in Mexico and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that republic."

Interview given out by Mr. Bryan at South Bend, Ind., March 10:

"I cordially approve of the position taken by the President in the Mexican matter as that position is reported in this afternoon's paper—namely that he will send troops across the border to overtake and punish those who were guilty of the outrage against an American community; but will not intervene in the affairs of Mexico or enter Mexico for the purpose of invasion.

"I am glad he is not permitting the men who have been advocating intervention for two years to force him into intervention now, however exasperating the attack on Columbus. The parties making the attack are in insurrection against the government of Mexico and we can not therefor consider this an act of war on the part of the Mexican government. Outlaws who are being hunted by their own government do not speak for their country and can not justly become a cause of war."

TO WAR AS A MEANS OF SETTLING THIS CONTROVERSY.

If he can reach an amicable settlement of the submarine dispute without war, the country will be happy. It is not fair to assume that he will ask the country to go to war to vindicate the right of an American to make a fool of himself by riding on an armed merchantman.

W. J. BRYAN.

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Planning for World Peace

Numerous plans are being made with a view to preventing future wars. The spirit is laudable and many of the plans embody suggestions that may fit into a comprehensive plan. The plan most prominently spoken of is that put forward by the League to Enforce Peace, of which ex-President Taft is the executive head. The trouble about this plan is that it ALLIES US WITH THE NATIONS OF THE OLD WORLD AND COMPELS US TO JOIN IN WAR WITH THEM TO ENFORCE THE FINDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY, when these FINDINGS ARE NOT ACQUIESCED IN. We could not, of course, hope to exert a controlling influence in such a body; we would, therefore, be at the mercy of the European nations and would be compelled to take part in the wars which they undertook. In other words, we would put our army and navy at the service of European monarchs and agree to furnish the men and the money with which to fight out their quarrels, if it so happened that they took advantage of our strength and decided to make use of us in this way.

The plan as it has been set forth would also require the abandonment of the Monroe Doctrine, because we could not have a voice in the settlement of European disputes without giving the European nations a voice in settling the disputes of the western hemisphere. The plan as proposed would therefore be objectionable. First; because it would involve an international alliance with European nations. Second; because it would involve abandonment of the Monroe Doctrine. Third; it would violate our constitution by transferring from congress to an international organization, the power to declare war, and, fourth, it would convert us from a moral influence into a policeman for the enforcement of order across the Atlantic.

It might be possible, however, to so amend the above plan as to eliminate some of the objections without lessening its effectiveness. First; let all the nations agree to the organization of a court to which will be referred all questions of an international character, when these questions can not be settled by diplomacy. Second; let the decisions be enforceable by two groups, the nations of the western hemisphere enforcing, without European aid, the decisions relative to differences between the nations of the western hemisphere, providing a majority of the western nations approve of the decision, the nations of the eastern hemisphere agreeing to enforce decisions relating to the disputes between the nations of the eastern hemisphere, providing a majority of the nations approve of such decision. If the Asiatic nations are not willing to join with the European nations in such an agreement, the plan could provide for a third group composed of the Asiatic nations and they could