

## Guarantees of Peace

The President has won a signal victory in securing the acceptance of the League of Nations idea. That is the one thing upon which his heart is set, and his presence at the conference and the popular receptions accorded him in Great Britain, France and Italy have powerfully contributed toward the accomplishment of this result.

The principle for which he contends, having been adopted with great enthusiasm, it ought not to be difficult to agree upon the details. While we await the complete plan for a League of Nations we may profitably consider means that may be employed to reduce the probability of a recourse to arms. I ask consideration for the "four propositions," two of which were emphasized by the President before the signing of the armistice.

### SECRET TREATIES

1. The abolition of secret treaties. No one acquainted with European politics during the last hundred years will doubt that secret treaties have done much to provoke war. They have operated to encourage the doing of things that cause war, and they have, by giving offense to nations not included, aroused the resentments that inflame passion and increase enmities.

Christ's indictment, "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil," is true in world politics as well as in private affairs. The things that are pledged in secret treaties are the things that could not be promised openly and, therefore, publicity would prevent them and thus remove a fruitful source of international conflict. The secret treaties made by the participants in the war just ended are even now making more difficult the problems which confront the peace commissioners.

### ARMAMENT QUESTION

2. The reduction of armaments, though not a new doctrine, has been lifted into a proposition of the first magnitude by the attention which the President has called to it. It is so important that it will be difficult to convince the world that the treaty to be concluded at Versailles will be an enduring one unless it makes provision for a substantial reduction in or restriction upon armaments.

The demand for a reduction of armaments goes to the very root of the trouble and implies a revolution in the world's thought. Heretofore preparations for war have been defended on the ground that such preparations insured peace. The doctrine has, of course, been combatted.

Men like John Bright pointed out more than half a century ago that rivalry in armaments would, as a natural result, cause war instead of preventing it, but the advocates of the opposite theory, ably supported by those interested in the manufacture of war equipment, have been able to control the action of their governments. In each nation reduction has been opposed on the ground that it would not be safe to reduce, or even to stop increasing, while other nations continued their preparation, and any movement looking to joint action has met with innumerable and insurmountable objections.

But experience has taught the world a costly lesson, and everywhere the cry for relief is heard. War debts so far surpass anything ever believed to be possible that the nations from sheer necessity will be driven to consider anything that promises reduction of taxation.

It is not, however, an easy doctrine to apply.

1. Because nations differ in exposure to attack, natural barriers giving greater protection to some nations than to others.

2. A difference of opinion as to the relative danger of armies on land and battleships on the sea, each nation being likely to consider the form of defense upon which it relies as less dangerous to the world than other forms of defense which it does not deem necessary. The world's confidence in the future will be largely proportionate to the success which shall crown the efforts of the advocates of a reduction of all armaments. When the armaments are reduced and a limit fixed to their increase, no nation can prepare for war without giving notice of its hostile intention, and this, of course, will prevent any considerable preparation for war.

### THIRTY TREATIES

3. There is one guarantee of peace which seems quite sure to be incorporated in the treaty — its popularity being due in part to confidence in its efficacy and partly to the fact that the adoption

of it does not require any concession on the part of the nations which will gather at the peace conference. I refer to the principle embodied in the thirty treaties into which the United States has entered with nations representing three-quarters of the population of the world. These treaties, negotiated within thirty months after the 4th of March, 1913, establish a new principle. They are not arbitration treaties because the findings of the tribunals provided for are not binding upon the nations participating.

The arbitration treaties negotiated by our own and other nations contain four exceptions—questions of honor, independence, vital interest and the interest of the third party. These questions by the terms of the treaty, are not to be submitted to arbitration, and yet these are the very questions out of which wars grow. The thirty treaties above referred to cover all controversies of every kind and character, leaving nothing that can become a cause of war until after a period of investigation, which, first, gives time for passions to subside; second, for questions of fact to be separated from questions of honor, and, third, for the peace forces of the world to operate.

In nearly all of these treaties the time allowed is one year. It is believed that these treaties will make war almost impossible between the contracting nations.

Wars are usually begun when the nations are excited, and man is not himself when excited. When a man is angry he boasts of what he can do, and he usually overestimates his strength; when he is calm he considers what he ought to do and conscience asserts itself. Time for "cooling off" is, therefore, in itself a substantial guaranty of peace.

Then, too, time is necessary to an understanding of the real issues. When passion is aroused, the vision is blurred and all questions are likely to be regarded as questions of honor; investigation sifts the issues and separates the thing that can be arbitrated from the things supposed to be vital to the life of the nation. Time is also necessary for the mobilizing of the peace sentiment of the world.

Nations have had machinery for war but not for peace. They could go to war in a day, but, until the nations joined in the treaties providing for the investigation of all disputes, they were helpless when diplomacy failed.

The President in his recent speech at the Sorbonne, France, referred to the principle embodied in these treaties, and the dispatches report that his remarks were understood as suggesting the adoption of the principle embodied in the thirty treaties above referred to. As Great Britain, France and Italy were among the nations which entered into these treaties with us, it will be easy for them to favor the incorporation of the principle in the Versailles convention. It is not too much to say that such action would go far toward insuring world peace.

### REFERENDUM ON WAR

But I venture to suggest another guarantee which has not yet been a subject of discussion, namely, a referendum on war. The principle of democracy is spreading, and nothing is more democratic than the referendum. Democracy means the rule of the people, and the tendency of the world's thought is toward more and more popular methods of government. The referendum rests upon the theory that the people not only have a right to govern, but that they have the intelligence necessary to govern wisely.

The more important the subject the more important it is that the citizen's voice shall be heard. We recognize this in requiring a popular vote on constitutional amendments, and more recently in providing for referendum on municipal franchises. If this be true, upon what questions has the citizen a stronger claim to vote than upon questions involving his life and the question of war taxes. Surely those who must shed their blood in defense of the position taken by the government can claim a direct voice in deciding what position the government shall take; those who are to pay the taxes and leave war burdens as a legacy to their children ought to have a right to vote directly on propositions that involve the imposition of such burdens.

If objection is made to the referendum on the ground that woman's suffrage is spreading throughout the world, I answer that woman's suffrage adds still greater weight to the arguments in favor of the referendum, for history

shows that the larger part of the burdens of war falls upon woman. It is her son whose life is required, or her husband or her brother. To the man, war may mean death, but to the mother it means the loss of one upon whom she has a right to rely; to the wife it means that she must be both father and mother to the children.

If it is objected that time will be required to take a referendum it is sufficient answer to say that in the war just ended the men eligible for service appeared at the places of registration, with hardly an exception, upon only a few days' notice.

Ten millions offered themselves in a single day with no summons except that which reached them through the newspapers. No nation, of course, would be required to stand defenseless if attacked, but a referendum can be required before any nation is permitted to make an attack upon another nation. If all the treaty nations agree that war shall not begin without a referendum, there will be no nation to make the attack.

It is likely that the referendum will be favored most by the nations whose governments are most democratic, but there is no reason why provision should not be made for it even in monarchies, because the governments of monarchies are becoming more and more popular in character. Our constitution takes the power to declare war from the executive and vests it in the congress. It will be still more democratic to vest that power in the people.

Many other means of insuring peace will be suggested, but I venture to submit that the adoption of the four above mentioned would enable the world to rest in the confidence that we have seen the last world war. Would not this be the greatest victory that could come out of the world war through which we have passed?

But the spirit of the treaty will be more important than any specific guaranty. Upon what theory will the treaty be framed? Is it to be the old spirit which builds upon force and threats? Which philosophy will it endorse, the philosophy of Nietzsche or the philosophy of the Nazarene?

### LLOYD GEORGE'S NOBLE SENTIMENT

Lloyd George, the great British Premier, struck a high note when, on November 12, the day after the signing of the armistice, he said:

"What are the principles on which that settlement is to be effected? Are we to lapse back into the old national rivalries, animosities and competitive armaments, or are we to initiate the reign on earth of the Prince of Peace? It is the duty of liberalism to use its influence to insure that it shall be a reign of peace."

"What are conditions of peace? They must lead to a settlement which will be fundamentally just. No settlement that contravenes the principles of eternal justice will be a permanent one. The peace of 1871 imposed by Germany on France outraged all the principles of justice and fair play. Let us be warned by that example."

"We must not allow any sense of revenge, any spirit of greed, any grasping desire to override the fundamental principles of righteousness. Vigorous attempt will be made to hector and bully the government in an endeavor to make it depart from the strict principles of right and to satisfy some base, sordid, squalid ideas of vengeance and of avarice. We must relentlessly set our faces against that."

A noble sentiment; brave words. Strength to his arm as long as he fights for such a peace.

It is encouraging to read that President Wilson was so impressed by the speech above quoted that he cabled as follows:

"May I express my sincere admiration of the admirable temper and purpose of your address of the twelfth, just reproduced in part in our papers? It is delightful to be made aware of such community of thought and counsel in approaching the high and difficult task now awaiting us."

If the President and the British Premier win out and write a treaty that will "initiate the reign on earth of the Prince of Peace," it will end war — the specific guarantees above mentioned will fit into such a treaty and strengthen it.

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[Written for New York American.]

The general public seems to be rather confused over the phrase "freedom of the seas." When the German submarine fleet came up out of the depths and was handed over to the allied admirals they gave a fairly good illustration of one way in which it can be accomplished.