

The Commoner

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Conference Begins New Epoch

The Arms Conference has passed into history after a session that may be regarded as the beginning of an epoch. It did not do all that the most sanguine hoped for, but movements by large masses are never as rapid as the enthusiast wishes. The idealist goes in advance of events and he must not be disappointed if those who move more slowly retard the pace of the army.

That which has been accomplished is substantial and the educational influence that the conference will exert is even more important than its accomplishments.

The world takes a long step in advance when the leading naval powers scrap half their battleship tonnage and agree to a naval holiday. Besides that they have excluded the submarine as a weapon against commerce and they have made poisonous gas illegitimate in war. The conference makes possible a large reduction in current taxation. Who can belittle such a measure of relief at a time like this?

Scarcely of less importance is the adjustment of many of the troublesome problems of the Far East. The Shantung question could not be solved at Paris: It is solved at Washington, and China has had a new birth; her national hopes are about to be realized. Japan has won one of the greatest victories of the conference, viz., the confidence of the world. She will not lose pecuniarily by recognizing China's rights, but it is real progress when any ambitious nation recognizes human rights, especially the right so greatly emphasized in recent years, viz., the right of self-determination.

While the danger of war in the Pacific has been greatly exaggerated, still it is gratifying to have measures taken that will allay even groundless fears and furnish guarantees of peace.

The failure of the conference to deal with the question of land armaments is to be regretted, but it is a sin of omission that can and will be corrected later.

Democrats will ungrudgingly commend what has been done; they will not seek to detract from or to minimize the work of the conference. Principle as well as policy will compel them to give credit to the administration for what has been done. They have reason to be as happy as the Republicans because every step that the conference has taken has been along the Democratic line of march. Things have been accomplished this year that were impossible one year ago and still more impossible two years ago, just as some things are left for the future which are not now ripe for settlement. The Bible phrase, "the fullness of time," presents a real truth. The world was not ready for the Arms Conference before the late war, or even at its close.

The leading nations were obsessed with the idea that preparedness would prevent war and

Lincoln's Appeal for Loyalty to Law

Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property and his sacred honor. Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books and almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice.—From address to Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill., Jan. 27, 1837, when Lincoln was twenty-seven years of age.

they engaged in a mad rivalry that deluged the world with blood. Anger was still hot when the treaty was framed. Now to the moral sense of the nations has been added the fear of universal bankruptcy; they have faced about and are marching toward the only peace that is possible—peace through friendship and cooperation.

The Arms Conference vindicates the plan embodied in the thirty treaties negotiated by the United States with three-fourths of the world and afterwards embodied in the covenant of the League of Nations. The plan provided for investigation before war with a view to peaceful settlement. Confer before a resort to force.

The success of this Conference makes certain the calling of other conferences of the same kind. The precedent now established will be followed until we shall have a permanent International Tribunal before which all world problems can be openly discussed and by which all can be settled.

World peace is seemingly nearer than it has ever been before; the song of the Shepherds at Bethlehem may soon become the international anthem.

W. J. BRYAN.

GOVERNMENT BANK PROFITEERING

On another page will be found a statement showing that the New York branch made a profit of 215 per cent in 1920 and 19 per cent in 1921. Why should a government bank profiteer?

Governor Edwards is running true to form. He appointed James Nugent as public prosecutor. The New Jersey Senate refused to confirm by a vote of 17 to 3. The dry sentiment is growing.

Next Congress Must Be Dry

It is time for the friends of prohibition to take notice of the fight that is on. More than thirty organizations have been formed for the purpose of overthrowing prohibition. They do not openly attack the amendment; that is neither necessary nor wise. All they need to do is to secure a congress that will change the alcoholic percentage.

The Supreme Court has declared that congress has power to fix the alcoholic percentage; provided, of course, the beverage is not to be made intoxicating. But there may be a difference of opinion as to what constitutes intoxicating liquor. A per cent that would intoxicate a beginner would not, of course, intoxicate the old toper. Just where the Supreme Court would draw the line if it were called upon to nullify a percentage law no one can say in advance. Until the decision was rendered the question would be in doubt and saloons would open up everywhere. But even graver consequences are possible. A "wet" congress could refuse money to enforce the law and that would be equivalent to repeal. Even one House could obstruct appropriations. It is necessary, therefore, that the dries shall be on their guard in every district and in every state in which a Senator will be elected. Put none but the faithful on guard. If the "wets" get control of congress prohibition will become the only issue until congress is again "dry," and one back-set would encourage the "wets" to continue their efforts in the hope of again catching the "drys" napping.

Every man and every woman who favors prohibition should be on the alert. Let no man be nominated for congress or the senate who is not openly and unequivocally for the law as it now stands and for any additional laws that may be found necessary to make prohibition effective. The "wets" have no politics—they have simply thirst. They are not interested in other questions; they think only of this question. The "drys" must not allow their interest in other issues to lead them into carelessness. Vigilance is the price of law and order. Let all be awake and on guard.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE PIONEER

The pioneer seldom receives the reward that he earns. He discovers, usually at great sacrifice to himself, the riches of undeveloped countries and, when the hidden wealth is proclaimed to the world, others come in and profit by his explorations. As a rule, he passes away before his prophecies are entirely fulfilled and is remembered by monuments or distinctions, often in the form of cities and counties named after him. While the visible rewards bestowed upon the pioneer are usually very inadequate, he has what money cannot buy—the satisfaction that comes with the consciousness of service rendered. This is really the richest reward that anyone can earn.