





Paris was done, and in the confusion occasioned by the unexpected turn of public feeling in America, the moment was missed, and the Peace Conference broke up before the foundations of peace were laid.

We perceive to-day perhaps more clearly than we saw in the exhaustion and excitement of 1919, how limitation of armaments is the very first essential, if not of peace itself, at any rate of the essentials of peace.

Peace itself requires an attitude of mind, the attitude of mind in fact which has prompted America to call this Conference and inspired Great Britain's response to her proposals. No Treaty, no international Agreement, can impose this attitude of mind, but without it they are mere scraps of paper. The failure of the League of Nations to make progress hitherto in bringing about limitation of armaments has been a most striking example of this.

Twice the Assembly has met, twice it has exerted its utmost efforts to launch a scheme of proportional disarmament, and twice it has been baffled. The Second Assembly issued a Report containing a striking passage wherein the causes of this failure are analysed. It is worth taking to heart.

"It is of great importance that the peoples of the world should be made aware of how much of the money and personnel devoted to armaments is the direct consequence of international fear and suspicion, by reason of the relativity of their respective state of safety. It is only by a realisation of this truth that an effective appeal can be made to the reason and conscience of mankind in favour of a serious reduction of armaments."

Here we have it! "International fear and suspicion." These are the obstacles which we must rely on Washington to remove. Important practical decisions will be made there also, no doubt, upon the details and scope of disarmament, and there are pessimists who fear that the Conference may yet be wrecked upon the rocks of detail. Our own Foreign Minister, Lord Curzon, seems, to judge by his speech in the City on November 24th, to be oppressed with forebodings, not exactly that the Conference will be wrecked, but that it will not attain its aim. Lord Curzon reminds us that he has seen many false dawns. He has almost lost his belief, it seems, in the possibility of a new day. There was a Peace Conference once at the Hague, he reminds us, which was almost a prelude to the World War.

To those of us who grasp the profound change which the existence of the League of Nations has produced in international politics, these fears seem groundless.

The Hague Conference, and indeed all former International Peace Conferences, had no continuous life. They drew such life as they had from potentates and not from peoples. A Czar could summon them, a Kaiser could express his sympathies with their aims, pledges might be exchanged. But when the representatives had

separated and made their reports to their Governments, the episode was over and there was no machinery in existence to carry on the work of the Conference, or to supervise its execution.

Now all that is changed. There is a League which includes fifty-one States already pledged to co-operate to remove the causes of war. Its efforts are not spasmodic, but continual. The Assembly meets annually, the Council about once every two months, and it has, moreover, an international Secretariat at its service to carry through every decision it makes.

This power of continuity is one of the main differences between the League of Nations and every League or Alliance that has ever been devised before. Thanks to it, Geneva can go on where Washington leaves off. League Commissions of experts have been at work for over a year studying the component parts of the great problem of the limitation of armaments. The private manufacture of arms and the use of poison gas are two of the subjects upon which the League of Nations has collected, and is even now collecting, statistics and information. It is not likely that the statesmen assembled at Washington will look into these matters for themselves. If they do, they must surely use the material which the League has already prepared; if they do not, the League can carry on and complete the achievements of Washington by preparing a scheme for limiting armaments, proportionately and prudently, in every branch of warfare.

BLANCHE DUGDALE.

#### NAVAL DISARMAMENT.

By A NAVAL EXPERT.

Many people discount Naval opinion on the present disarmament proposals as it appears to them that naturally the Naval mind must be biased, as the proposals cut at the risk of their employment. This is, however a wrong inference, as Naval Officers suffer from high taxation even more than their brothers on shore, as they have to pay the same income tax on their pay before receipt, and married officers have to keep two establishments going, on board and on shore. Moreover, a man who has experienced war in the front line is not so keen about it as a man who has only seen it from an arm chair. Sailors are therefore just as anxious to remove any unnecessary cause for national expenditure on War as civilians.

The bitter experience of War has however shown very clearly that drastic cuts at the Navy in peace mean tenfold expenditure when war threatens, and it is in order to help keep a balanced judgment that this short article is written.

The principles on which our Sea Power is based are well known, but at the risk of reiteration it is necessary continually to emphasize them and prevent the public becoming apathetic towards the great danger that threatens our Empire should our Sea Power be lost through relaxed vigilance.

The fact is, that this Island depends entirely on its oversea food supply—there is hardly seven weeks' reserve of food stuffs to feed our over-populated country.

The Navy's primary function is, therefore, to command the lines of communication with the countries that supply us with food or with the raw materials that are necessary to keep our industries going. This principle is based on self-preservation.

In addition, our Colonial Empire, which is part and parcel of the Mother Island, depends on sea communications to maintain its existence. This fact, as well as patriotic spirit, governed the participation of the Dominions in the Great War and their expressed determination to share the burden of a strong Navy.

Now in order to fulfil our duties of keeping the High Seas open for our commerce a certain number of ships of various types are necessary. These numbers are dependent on the length of the lines of communication and the possible forces against us. No other country in the world approaches us in the length of its sea communications.

For the moment, Germany and Russia are out of the picture—only temporarily, remember—the principal possible forces against us are therefore Japan and America.

Goodwill and ententes are of course all mile-stones on the road to Universal Peace—the Utopia of the Pacifist—but the practical man knows that the only real safeguard is to be strong enough to ensure the respect of your neighbour. As long as human nature remains what it is, so long is this the only safeguard.

Now, by many naval minds, the drastic Washington proposals are considered right in principle, but must be modified so as to prevent us being placed in such a position that our vulnerable sea communications offer too tempting an objective to a neighbour, however friendly he may appear now at the moment.

The principal modifications which many consider must be made is with regard to the future shipbuilding programme. Our premier shipbuilding position would be irretrievably destroyed if a ten-year holiday were insisted upon, because shipbuilding firms must keep their plant and organization of skilled workmen continuously employed. The main object of reduced expenditure would be attained if, as pointed out in *The Times*, a fixed yearly or two-yearly Capital Ship increment was permitted, with a corresponding earlier scrapping of obsolescent ships to keep to the total number agreed upon.

Capital ships, *i.e.* battle cruisers and battleships, as pointed out by the American note, are taken as the unit. They require attendant small craft, which are approximately three light cruisers and six destroyers to each capital ship.

These numbers are based on the experience gained in the War as to the numbers of small craft necessary for scouting and screening against submarine attack. In addition, numbers of

cruisers are required for police duties all over the world. Those of our countrymen who travel will understand what this means, and the effect of the arrival of a man-of-war in a foreign port to protect British nationals against riot or revolution.

Another point of view that should not be forgotten is that though it may be well argued that man-of-war construction is unproductive and therefore economically unsound, yet, as our ship construction is entirely self-contained, every penny spent on shipbuilding finds its way back into the pockets of workmen and investors in the stock of the big armament firms.

The impetus and financial stability given to these firms enables them to extend their operations to purely commercial, and so called productive, manufacture, such as agricultural machinery, motor cars and merchant ship building with its host of auxiliary machinery. It must be remembered that a modern battleship is a mass of machinery equally adapted to civilian requirements.

Further—this is most important—it is a well known commercial axiom that "Trade follows the Flag." The Red Ensign of the mercantile navy can only lead trade because of the security offered by the White ensign of the man-of-war.

Now with regard to the personnel—the public little realises the great hardship that will have to be borne by the officers and men who may be arbitrarily retired. All our sailors—officers and men—are long service men; many of whom have given the best of their lives to the country and are too old to learn a new profession. These will be unemployed, in many cases with families to support.

The Navy cannot believe that the country will subject them to such gross injustice, and relies on proper provision being made. But many are doubtful, because experience has shown that the Treasury is often full of fair words which fail to materialise.

The sailor is on the lee shore of unemployment, and prays and trusts his friends on shore to help him to beat out to a good offing of settled and appropriate work.

#### POLITICAL NOTES.

Two things alone seem worth our attention at the present moment—the Washington Conference and Ireland. Hope of an agreement with Ireland seems brighter now than it has yet been, but it is impossible to discuss the rapidly changing situation usefully in these short notes.

The Washington Conference seems to be fairly planted on the road to success; should Tokyo assent to the terms which have been forwarded to her by Baron Kato, namely the naval ratio, abrogation of the much discussed Anglo-Japanese treaty with an agreement between France, America, Japan and ourselves in its place, and the prohibition of the fortification of "key" islands



in the Pacific, the programme of the present Conference will be nearly half over. I say "present" designedly, as the value of these Conferences is obvious, and their repetition in the present vexed state of world politics a vital necessity. In fact it has been definitely stated in the English press that President Harding's plan is that this great meeting shall be the first of a series. Is it too much to hope that a day will soon come when Germany and France may meet to discuss the things that belong to their peace?

**A Valuable Organisation.**—Before Lady Fitzalan went to Ireland she sketched out a plan which has since proved to be of great value to the National Unionist Association and to Conservative M.P.'s and their wives. Briefly, her scheme comprised the division of England and Wales into thirteen areas: in each of these areas a Chairman was chosen and an Executive Committee set up from amongst the wives, or elected women representatives, of the Conservative Members of Parliament contained therein. This Committee deals with the women's side of the work of Conservative organisation in the various constituencies, with especial regard to the problem of the women's vote. The areas hold an Annual Conference and at a meeting last week at Reading in the Southern area the delegates had the privilege of listening to speeches from Mr. Stanley Baldwin and Colonel Leslie Wilson.

M. LLOYD-GREAME.

Dear Madam,

I gladly accept your invitation to reply briefly to the remarks on the "Die-hards" in your last month's Political Notes; since if those remarks were to pass quite unchallenged it would seem as if we had become an official organisation for the propagation of Coalition views rather than an Association for upholding Conservative principles.

To suggest then the estimation in which I conceive we should hold the "Die-hards," I would refer your readers to what happened later on at Liverpool, where the points made by the "Die-hards" received such applause from the whole Conference—filled though it was with supporters of the Government whipped up for the occasion—that the Government had to review the situation. With the result that, during the luncheon recess, they hit on the wonderful expedient of introducing as their own an amendment which was practically the same as the "Die-Hards'" original Resolution—the Government speakers saying they did not disagree with one phrase in the original motion. Although, having the control of the press, they were able to represent the passing of this amendment as a defeat of the "Die-hards." Fair minded people would feel that such a defeat was not very different to a victory, and that the "Die-Hards" who thus forced the hand of the Government have held aloft a standard which a perhaps ever-increasing number of Conservatives and others throughout the country may be glad to follow.

For the stand they made was for principle in politics—and that appeals to a body far wider than Conservatives. And English men and women are getting ashamed of a Government which surrenders to crime, sacrifices the country's friends to its enemies, and endeavours to overcome its difficulties by running away from them.

FRANCIS CONWAY COBBE.

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