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## A NATION'S HEALTH — IS — A NATION'S WEALTH

### IS THIS THE GAME?

There seems to be no doubt that British opinion is hardening against the folly of driving Germany to desperation as a prelude to wholesale repudiation. But there does not appear to be so very much that the British can do about it, unless they win the co-operation of the French. In this matter of reparations and war debts, Great Britain is little more than a banker, conveying German money to the United States. So far as the French payments are concerned, the Germans pay the French, the French pay the British, and the British pay the Americans. Quite a sum stays in French hands, but practically none in British hands.

Great Britain could accomplish nothing by "repudiating," if we may suppose she contemplated any such action. Even if she let the French off as a corollary of this action, this would not help the Germans unless the French also let the Germans off. But if Great Britain and France can agree upon a policy of relaxing their demands upon Germany and can couple with this an arrangement by which German payments of unconditional reparations are postponed until a better season, then they might be in a position to offer the United States a choice between a voluntary extension of the moratorium or an involuntary loss of debt payments by the joint action of its debtors. So far as the American Treasury is concerned, the result would be the same.

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Of course, British public men—and possibly some French public men—realize perfectly the quandary in which President Hoover, Secretary Mellon, the lords of Wall Street, and, in short, all Americans who understand the situation, find themselves. They have a Congress which is thinking solely of the Congressional elections next autumn. These people back home know that the United States suffered a deficit for the last fiscal year of \$903,000,000, nearly a round billion dollars, an enormous sum. They know, further, that the returns for the first half of the current year indicate that their country will have a deficit next June of \$2,200,000,000, a still more stupendous sum swelling to over twice as much. Under these circumstances, it is fairly difficult to persuade the average small town taxpayer that the United States should voluntarily remit the payment of debts owing her in Europe, adding them to the already heavy burden which the American taxpayer's back must bear.

Then the United States must vote immense sums for unemployment relief. This money will either be taxed out of her people immediately or added to her debt on which interest must be paid. As Congress piles these new taxes and this new debt on its constituents, it does not relish the idea of telling them at the same time that it proposes to let the German taxpayer off—or even the French and the British. Rural Congressmen are afraid that their home people would not understand it. They think that they may not be "internationally minded" enough. And this might prove to be true with the opposing candidates and their "stumpers" telling these same people that they were being mulcted in order that "the Huns" may go free.

No one can deny that it is a most difficult situation. President Hoover and his friends can only do what they can. They are not dictators—they are the creatures of a democratic form of government. The vast majority of their "masters" are in the position of the Congressmen who asked, indignantly, on one occasion: "What is 'abroad' to us?" Thus while they might, and probably would, be very ready to join in an extension of the moratorium or any other scheme which promised to side-track the threatened German revolution, their hands are tied. Congress, indeed, has just gone on the stage and tied them in front of the audience in true vaudeville style.

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But, in that case, might not President Hoover and those "in the know" welcome action by Great Britain and France which would accomplish the very result they have in mind while freeing them from all political responsibility? They could even denounce this action in revolutionary fashion. They could be quite as "Main Street" as the most town-pumpish Congressman. Yet Germany would be saved from revolution—the German people would be able to pay their private debts—American investors would be richer by three billions of dollars—and a world collapse, involving the United States, would be averted.

It is not necessary that the Franco-British agreement for which some are hoping should be acceptable to the American electorate. It is only necessary that it should be acceptable to the informed oligarchy which speaks for the American electorate—and which alone can make any trouble. The American Government would then do nothing about it if payments were shut off in this way, and neither would anybody else. If the French agree, they will not move troops into the Ruhr. The British

will not be interested. The Germans will be happy. The individual investor will be paid.

Is this the plan? Is it a plot of the machiavellian foreigners and the international financiers to fool Main Street?

### ARMAMENT NO SECURITY

PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY raised an interesting point in his address before the Anglo-French students' conference on disarmament yesterday when he declared that there were no material guarantees against war attacks from the air. "You can destroy London and we can destroy Paris, but neither can be defended." His plan to provide the essential material security is to prohibit military aviation, as it is supposed to be prohibited in Germany, and to internationalize commercial air companies.

It may be noted, in this connection, that much of what we fear from the air is purely speculative. We do not really know what an attack from the air would mean. We do not know what actual defences the Powers have individually devised against aerial attack. All that the public knows is that none of the Powers have neglected to develop aerial defence, and that from time to time rumours gain currency that some new invention has rendered certain dangers from the air less menacing or less threatening.

There was talk of poisoning vast areas by dropping bombs laden with poison gas before the war ended; but no such bombs were dropped. There have been innumerable reports since then of progress made in poison gases that would virtually annihilate cities on to which they were dropped; but this is only hearsay. So, for that matter, are all the other rumours about effective aerial defences. Such actual facts as the new British searchlight, which makes it virtually impossible for an airplane to escape from its focus, once the airplane comes within range of its light area, do leave on the public mind an impression that Britain at least fears aerial warfare. Professor Murray's statement, unequivocal as it is, certainly lends credence to that viewpoint.

But whether his solution is a practical one is an entirely different matter. It would be all very well to abolish military aviation by international agreement, just as it is well to limit naval armaments by such agreement. But the internationalization of commercial air companies would be of very little use in the case of war, since the warring nations would naturally drop out of the combine at once and convert such airplanes as they had within their reach into warring weapons.

It seems futile, however, to discuss this or that scheme of disarmament so long as the competition among the great nations in armament expenditure continues,—for it is useless to disguise the fact that it is, in the final analysis, competition, in that each is seeking to make herself secure against any possible combination of attack. Every one of the Great Powers in the world, except Germany, is spending far more on armaments today than before the Great War. The world expenditure is officially estimated by the League of Nations at \$4,500,000,000, of which Europe spends 60 per cent, the United States 20 per cent, and the rest of the world the balance of 20 per cent. We are inevitably reminded of the words of Viscount Grey, Foreign Minister in the years before the war, when he told the world:

"The enormous growth of armaments in Europe, the sense of insecurity and fear caused by them—it was these that made war inevitable."

Have we any less sense of insecurity today? Is the fear caused by such a sense of insecurity today less than it was in 1914? A war that killed 10,873,577 men (known dead), wounded some 20,000,000 more, made nine million children orphans and five million women widows, entirely apart from the tremendous losses it caused through revolution, famine and pestilence, did less to end war than any war the world has ever known. Are we any nearer peace now than we were in 1914?

### RELIEF FOR THE TROPICS

A MODEST announcement made before the American Association for the Advancement of Science in New Orleans yesterday will, if it proves to be susceptible of practical demonstration, be a veritable boon to large sections of native populations in tropical climes.

A small body of men from the Harvard Medical School, carrying on experiments in the African jungle, have discovered a cure for the dread disease of elephantiasis and its allied diseases. These take the form of hideous swellings of different parts of the body, more frequently the legs and the head, and though they have been known to exist for four thousand years, no cure for them has ever been discovered until now.

It is said that a small operation, costing two dollars, will eliminate from tumours the small, thread-like worms that cause the disease. In the past, operation has merely served to allay the progress of the malady, never to eliminate the cause.

The Harvard men will have conferred a very real benefit upon millions of sufferers in tropical and semi-tropical zones if their discovery achieves all they expect of it. Thus science continues its triumphal march of victory against the forces of disease and human suffering.

Another and equally important discovery also announced at Baltimore is that of a serum which will, it is stated, cure influenzal meningitis. This is not to be confused with cerebro-spinal meningitis, which is caused by the infection of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord by an organism called the meningococcus. But it closely resembles that dread disease and is almost invariably fatal, early diagnosis being very difficult, since it usually starts as a cold which develops quickly into an acute form of influenzal meningitis that quickly terminates in death. In the one case cured, the doctors who have discovered the serum say, cure was rendered possible by the fact that the disease was diagnosed early and treatment administered before the abscesses formed. The importance of the discovery of the serum, it will be seen, is hard to over-estimate, though more work still remains to be done before its general use can be made thoroughly effective.

The worst of slaves are those that are constantly serving their passions.—Diogenes.