

II THE CASE FOR DISARMAMENT

*(The Empire Club,
Toronto, Nov. 4)*

In Canada, in most Anglo-Saxon countries, in Norway and in "safe countries" generally, the arguments in favour of serious and immediate disarmament are considered unanswerable. The burden of armaments is recognized as unbearable in a world striving to lift itself up out of a slough of depression. I see varying figures quoted by various speakers to show what sums different nations are spending in defence. The most accurate and impartial source I know is the League's Disarmament Year Book, since it applies the same method of calculation to all. This gives Great Britain's budget estimate for military, naval and air defences for 1930-31 as 95,000,000 pounds sterling (gold standard); this shows a decrease parallel to the fall in prices. It shows France's estimates for the three services as over 94,000,000 pounds sterling, a slight increase. The present French Government described the maintenance of this level of expenditure and the fortification of the northeastern frontier as compensation for the withdrawal from the Rhineland and for the reduction of compulsory military service from three years to one year.

When one considers the total financial, economic and social sacrifices made for Defence by each of the Great Powers, the differences among these totals are less than is usually believed. At any rate, the world's total Defence Budget estimates for 1930-31 would appear to have amounted to approximately four and a half billion American dollars -- a staggering total of unproductive expenditure. I will not labor the point.