

This National Republican Club is, I take it, a political and national organization. Its members are drawn from but one of the political parties in this country. Let me say at once that the subject we are discussing today cannot be discussed in terms of partisan politics, nor can it be discussed from the point of view of one country alone. That has been the weakness of every conference on disarmament. There has been far too much partisan politics, far too much national politics and far too little world policy. Disarmament, I repeat, is not a question for any one party or for any one country; it is a question for the world. We must get outside the bounds of party and of country if we are to give it the consideration it deserves and requires. Unless we are prepared to recognize that the nations of the world are more than ever dependent on one another and that the social, economic and cultural welfare of one is vitally influenced by the social, economic and cultural welfare of the others, unless we will approach the consideration of this question in that spirit, we cannot be hopeful of a successful or satisfactory issue from any disarmament conference. As long as each nation seeks only to make herself secure against any possible combination of attack, as long as the present wasteful competition in armament continues unabated, as long as only a selfish nationalistic mentality sways the minds of nations, just so long will it be *futile* to talk of *national* disarmament.

I do not think it is my function,—indeed it would be an unforgivable presumption to suggest what action your country should take on this question. But I am bold enough to say that I think the United States is in the best position to lead the way, to set the example. Providence has blessed you: you are the richest of nations in a material sense; you are safest in your geographical position; you are not suspect; you are not involved as the nations of Europe are involved; your position is unique and your influence unlimited. But what you ought to do and how you ought to do it is your own affair. It is for the other speakers to make proposals, not for me.

I am here as chairman to introduce the subject, to emphasise its importance, to tell you what war is like, and to plead for a real peace mentality. I base the plea on several things.

First, the maintenance of large and excessive national armaments creates a heavy overhead charge against the national exchequer contributed by the tax-payers of the country, and therefore makes the payment of all international debts, both public and private, very difficult and perhaps sometimes impossible. Armaments should be purely protective and precautionary.

Second, no nation can be trusted to preserve peace which has at its disposal unlimited force, because the possession of arms is always a human temptation to use them. Arms are not meant primarily to promote peace but to be used when the blood runs high and are, therefore, dangerous to all parties interested, armed and unarmed. Further, armaments in the long run really do not create national security. The over-armed or super-armed nation only succeeds in arousing the bitterness and hate of its enemies and the suspicions of its friends.

Third, as I see it, a measure of disarmament is the only thing we can now do quickly to give direct proof of that feeling of friendship for each other which is, and alone can be the basis of real peace. And let us not forget that the profitable investment of large sums of private capital in the production and sale of armaments creates a powerful economic interest in the community interested in war. War profiteering is by no means limited to war times.

*The world at the present time regards war as a normal condition*, as something which is inevitable and only in temporary suspense. How, for instance, would any of us define peace? How does anyone define peace? Nine people out of ten will say "Peace is when there is no war." That definition is wrong, it misleads, but it is how we do look at it.

War I repeat, is just as definite a fact for most of humanity as the lava in an active volcano to the people who live on its flanks. The volcano may be silent for a year, for ten years, for a century, but the frightful