

General Harbord,
Ladies and
Gentlemen,

I appreciate very highly the honour of being asked to preside at this meeting, and I am delighted to have the opportunity and privilege of being with you and of speaking to you on the vitally important subject of Disarmament.

I am not going to use time to repeat the usual platitudes about the common interests, the common language, the common traditions, and all those other natural and sentimental ties that bind your country and mine. It is no longer necessary: while we do not forget these things we cease to speak of them. I believe the time has come when our mutual friendliness, our neighbourliness, our unselfish interest in each other's welfare, can be taken for granted. Yet in those peaceful relations of many generations standing, there is a lesson to be learned, an all-important, a fundamental lesson in international relationships. Some may say that in our case the maintenance of peace is so obviously good business that such materially-minded people as ourselves would not act otherwise. I admit that. But peace is always good business. I think you will agree with me, however, that our peaceful relations have prevailed not because we have made treaties to abstain from war, or to abstain from making war an instrument of national policy (treaties have played very little part in our international diplomacy), but that the real reason for this happy history is that the peace between your country and mine has not been merely a negative peace, but a positive peace, founded on beliefs and sentiments of mutual friendship and mutual self-interest.

When your President invited me to be chairman of this gathering he said he supposed my views would be those of the average public man outside of the military services. The full implication of his words I do not know, but I take it he feels that in the United States, as in all countries, there is usually a difference of opinion between

those who have some technical knowledge of these matters and those who have not. I am on both sides of that fence:—once in the military service, I am now an average public man.

In giving consideration to the views on Disarmament advanced by our soldiers and sailors, let us always remember that when war comes it is their lives which are first sacrificed, that they usually are not politicians and speak in the most direct and outspoken manner, and that they cannot forget,—they *must* not forget their sacred responsibility to advise what they consider best for the safety of their country under all circumstances. They are not responsible for political relationships; they take these as they find them and they advise accordingly. It would be most unfair and unjust to say that our sailors and soldiers are all anti-disarmament, for I am sure that honest, mutual, universal disarmament would find among them many champions.

I know that one of the dearest hopes of the men who actually fought in the last great war—the one which most sustained them in those tragic days—was that their efforts, if victorious, would put an end to all war. In every mess on the Western Front through four long years one heard this hope expressed; it sustained us through every ordeal. I do not know how many of the men who then controlled the destinies of Europe entertained such hopes, but I do know that thousands, yea hundreds of thousands of citizens sacrificed their happiness, their health, their fortune and their chances of fortune and their lives in the hope of winning permanent peace for their children and for generations yet unborn. Let me add that I was one of that number—alas now sadly disillusioned. And while I am now unalterably opposed to excessive armaments and support to the best of my ability, honest, fair and universal disarmament, I am not a pacifist. If, unfortunately, my country were forced into another war I would offer my services willingly but not gladly, and I would carry out every duty faithfully and zealously, although I know that war is not a game of "bumble-puppy"—that its business is killing.