

It is naturally hard; it cannot be otherwise than hard. Great Britain has her possessions, or, rather, her dominions and her responsibilities—for those are better terms than “possessions”—in all quarters of the globe. Great Britain is an island. Great Britain for generations, yea, for centuries, has depended for her sustenance, for her very life, upon being able to preserve her lines of trade between her dominions, indeed, between her country and all parts of the world; and Great Britain feels that while she is quite prepared to limit all classes of armaments because of her exposed position, it is impossible for her to concede to a limitation which reduces her share of the larger vessels, which are really the determining factor in any ultimate trial, below that of any other power.

For many years she maintained a standard double that of any other power, or, rather, equal to any two. From that position she has receded and properly receded, and concedes to this country the full right to build up to whatever standard she has herself; but she does not feel that in that class of vessel she can reduce beyond that of another power, whatever that power may be. Besides, she feels that because of her far-flung responsibilities over the globe a certain minimum of police protection, as it were, must be maintained by smaller vessels, capable of traversing these widespread oceans. But in that respect she is quite ready to grant to the United States the right to build those to the full extent that she desires, but, of course, the United States feels that they have not the same need of those vessels, and they say, “If you build to the proportions you want of those, you should reduce the tonnage of the larger ships.”

From the American point of view it is wholly understandable. From the British point of view there is a lot to be said. They feel they are in a different position. They are ready to give the right to build up to the same standards in every category, but they say, “If you do not want to do it in the smaller vessels, don't prevent us, because our responsibilities taken care of by those smaller vessels are greater than yours.”

Such is the position of affairs. Such is the Gordian knot. But over all this there is a bright light shining. Beyond it all there is, if we can see it full, a clear horizon.

The best way to reduce armaments is to reduce the need of armaments. The best way to bring about limitation is to bring about conditions where the limitation can go down and ever down, and to that state of affairs I am proud to acknowledge the United States has contributed much.

In the Treaty of Versailles it was sought to accomplish this end by a joint arrangement between all the powers, with sanctions by way of concentration against any violator of the pact. In Locarno the same was sought, and in Locarno war was renounced as an instrument of national policy; but in Locarno, as in the previous treaty, the United States did not become a party. In the last Pact of Paris, known as the Kellogg Treaty, the United States has become a party, and, with all the signatories to that pact, has renounced war as an instrument of national policy. There is undoubtedly a step in advance. There is something done which will enable, as time goes on, every country to stress less the weight of armaments and to see the light of peace arising from co-operation shine abroad throughout the world. But in the meantime all agree that there must be a measure of protection allowed to each, and all agree, in so far, at all events, as the British Empire and the United States are concerned, that there shall be parity in that strength between the two countries.

All the difficulty now is centered in one point: the difficulty of determining just what parity is. To that stage we have come. It is a stage very far in advance, and the hope of every peace-loving man the world over will be that nothing will occur to prevent the march forward of the great nations of the world to realize the hopes of the League of Nations, the hopes of Locarno and the aspirations of the Kellogg Treaty (applause).

Now, I stated, when I opened, that in this we have a vital, a tremendous interest. You know where we are situated. We are only nine million people, and sixty thousand of our sons are buried in the soil of France.

With earnestness we speak and with confidence we speak. We are part of the British Empire. We naturally have the traditions and the feelings of that country; all the more so because we know that any hour of any day, or any day of any