

of it mainly consists in the fact that that feature of the whole negotiation and its conclusion seems to be lost sight of in many parts of the world.

Not only was it a tentative proposal, a tentative arrangement, subject to submission to the other parties to the Commission; of no effect whatever unless accepted; but it was a temporary arrangement arrived at in the full observation of the other parties, and with their full approval—I do not say with the approval of its terms, but with the approval of the negotiations in the hope of arriving at terms.

At this point, on the 30th day of July, because the acceptance of the two countries was only made on the 28th of last year—on the 30th of July the British Government submitted the exact terms in a letter to the United States Government, and stated that those terms, of course, were of no virtue or effect unless they appealed as fair to the United States, as well as to Italy and to Japan.

At this time, or shortly subsequent thereto, certain incomplete disclosures were made and a wrong impression got abroad, not only as to the conduct of the negotiations but as to the terms arrived at. In their reply, made after the whole matter had been before the American representatives for their review, for their suggestions and opinion, the United States took the ground—and I cannot criticize it in any way; I come in no spirit of criticism at all—the United States took the ground that at Geneva and since, they insisted on limitations not only of capital ships, of cruisers of ten thousand tons, carrying six-inch guns and over, of ocean-going submarines, but of all vessels of war, including cruisers of less than ten thousand tons and less than six-inch guns, and including all classes of submarines; and the United States argued—and argued, I admit it appeared to me, with very considerable force—that inasmuch as the vessels specially suited to this country must be vessels of the larger class, which alone were limited, it was unfair to the United States not to limit the other vessels as well.

On the other hand, Japan acquiesced in the arrangement; Italy, on the contrary, objected, but objected on totally different grounds from those taken by the United States.

Thus the matter stands today. The United States has made known its position and the whole matter is before the Preparatory Commission again, and I presume their course will be to try to find some other means of approach, and their anxious hope will be that a consensus along other means and other avenues may ultimately be attained.

Now, I have carried the discussion to this point with a determined intention of stating the whole case clearly, and my reason is that there is abroad—I know in this country, because I have visited it and I have learned so from men of much intelligence and wide public knowledge and interest—that there was something secret, something clandestine in the conduct of the negotiations, and that in the terms of the ultimate compromise arrived at—tentative though it may have been—there was something so grossly unfair to the United States as to indicate an Entente, a special arrangement, a sort of arm-in-arm conclave between Great Britain and France. A mere reference to the official record of what has been done shows not the slightest shadow of foundation for any allegation of that kind at all. I do not think any mind that is open to reason can read the record and come to any conclusion of the kind—and, mark you, I am not arguing that the position of France or of Britain in that compromise is right or can finally prevail.

Much can be said for the agreement, if you call it such, from the standpoint of both. Much can be said against it from the standpoint of the United States. But I am arguing that inasmuch as the negotiations were conducted and the conversations passed with the full approval of all parties of the Commission, and with their full knowledge, and inasmuch as nothing whatever was to be done or ever was done save subject to the approval of all of the parties, then it is not quite right to attribute to one a motive that is unworthy, or to say that anything has taken place which should in the least degree reduce the confidence of this country or its government in the good faith of the country to which I belong. (Applause.)

My opening sentence was that the naval problem, the problem of naval armaments, is a different one for America to what it is for England and to what it is for France. Because of that difference it is hard to reconcile the opposing opinions.