

The Economic Club of New York

Special Dinner

The Proposed League of Nations
From Different Points of View

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Hotel Astor
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Introduction

Honorable George W. Wickersham, Vice President of the Club, Presiding

Members of the Economic Club, ladies and gentlemen: The extraordinary interest which has been exhibited all over the country in the proposed League of Nations has resulted in this unique repetition of a program for discussion before the Economic Club. After the last meeting when the subject was discussed there were so many requests for further consideration of this burning topic that the management of the club put out a feeler to the members and received such hearty response that this meeting is the result.

One of our guests of honor a moment ago remarked to me that never since the famous discussion of the silver or gold standard has there been such widespread interest throughout the country in any one topic. Everywhere, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, men are debating the merits of the program for an association of League of Nations and to some extent the particular merits of the so-called covenant which is before the world and before the Peace Conference in Paris for discussion today. It is not unnatural that this should be so, because as this great struggle, which has devastated Europe for 4 ½ years progressed, there grew up in the minds of all right thinking people the world over the determination that this thing should not pass away until a new and determined effort be made to prevent the recurrence of all preventable wars for all future time. (Applause) And the current expression was coined out of that conviction, “That this war a war to end wars,” and out of that determination came the realization -- I will not say, I was going to say came the project for a League of Nations -- came a realization of the fact, I should rather say that

only by the permanent association of all the civilized nations of the world who could trust each other, could there be secured any satisfactory guarantee against the recurrence in the future of such atrocities and barbarities as the world has suffered from this last 4 ½ years.

Something, something all men admit must be done. Never again is the stern determination of civilization, shall the world be exposed to an assault upon liberty and civilization like that which was launched by Germany in August 1914, and to prevent that, to secure the liberties of the civilized world, the guarantee the permanence of the victory that has been won, obviously the first step must be the association of the powers that together overthrew Germany.

Precisely what form that shall take, precisely what the objections are, if any, to the project which is before the world today, the distinguished speakers who will follow me will point out to you. It is not my function as the presiding officer of this meeting to do more than to indicate to you the note upon which this discussion is to proceed, but I may add my own personal conviction that on reflection I am profoundly convinced that the people of this nation are determined that by the association of the powers of the world an end shall be put to the possibilities of the recurrence in the future of wars such as that in the past, (Applause) and we must outlaw all wars that are not wars of defense against evil, to the end that we may prevent the possibilities of such wars.

Now, we have before the regular distinguished speakers who are to debate at some length the subject matter assigned for this evening, the club has 3 or 4 guests of honor and in accordance

with our custom we shall present them in order to you and ask them to say a brief word, and a brief word under these circumstances means exactly what it does say, (Laughter) because there is a time limit to our meeting this evening and these gentlemen who have prepared their speeches with some care are entitled to have an adequate time in which to present their thoughts.

But I know that you will all join heartily in a welcome to the guest of honor whose name heads the list, a man who bears a name which is a household word in America, (Great Applause) a name enshrined in our hearts, and a name which is associated with everything that makes for virile, effective Americanism, a man who himself has justified his lineage by his recent deeds, who comes to us with the distinctions of a successful military career, young as he is, and who needs no further introduction from me, than to be presented to you as Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. (Great Applause; entire assemblage rises)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THEODORE ROOSEVELT: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: After the Chair has made such an able exposition of the duties of a simple guest of honor and as I feel myself interested in what the distinguished speakers have to say tonight, I am going to simply thank you and sit down. Thank you very much. (Great Applause)

MR. WICKERSHAM: One of the products of the war in carrying out one of the famous 14 points was the establishment in Europe of a new nation, known as Czecho-Slovak -- I think I

have got it right. (Laughter) If I have not, the first minister from Czecho-Slovak to the United States, whom I now have the honor to present, Mr. Pergler, will correct me. (Great Applause)

MR. PERGLER: Gentlemen, the pronunciation is correct. The guests of honor have just been discussing the proposition whether they should not combine and decline to speak, but is has been insisted that they must say at least a few words. So I want to leave with you just one thought.

The Czecho-Slovak Republic is surmounting the difficulties which inevitable all new nations must meet. She is organizing, headed by that great statesman, Thomas G. Masaryk, a progressive democratic government, a democratic government under the law, and not Bolshevist and not reactionary. I thank you. (Great Applause)

MR. WICKERSHAM: Prior to the war the current knowledge in this part of the world concerning Australia was I think largely confined to the habits of the kangaroos. (Laughter) As the war progressed we were taught by the story of Gallipoli that Australia was a country inhabited by heroes. (Great Applause) I believe without disparagement to any of the other self-governing nations that united in this great war, Australia in proportion to her population made a larger contribution to the armies than any other State. (Applause) She did it by volunteering and by volunteering alone. (Applause) A proposal to adopt conscription failed and I am inclined to think it failed because the Australians resented the idea that any able-bodied man in Australia had to be told to get into the army. They were one and all volunteering.

We have with us this evening the Commissioner of Australia, Mr. Bradden, now resident in this City, and I shall ask him now to say a word to us. (Applause)

MR. BRADDEN: Mr. President and gentlemen: As this appears to be tonight on the part of some of the guests a competition in brevity, I cannot permit Australia to be beaten. (Laughter) So I shall just say this: I want to thank the President for his graceful reference to Australia's fighting qualities; I want to thank you member so this great club for extending to me the privilege of being here tonight, and for the rest I just thank you. (Applause)

MR. WICKERSHAM: it has been said that the United States had the best diplomatic service in the world, because it was composed exclusively of men who had no training in diplomacy. (Laughter) Certain it is that America has had no cause to blush for the achievement of her Ambassadors and Ministers to foreign powers.

The last accession to these ranks comes, as occasionally happens in the history of the country, from the ranks of journalism, and from the position of critic, our guest of honor whom I will next call upon has now put himself in a position where his acts may be criticized by his former brothers of the pen, freely, or with that reserve that they sometimes exhibit to the occupants of high office. (Laughter) I take great pleasure in presenting to you Mr. Norman Hapgood, the Minister Designate to Denmark. (Great Applause)

MR. NORMAN HAPGOOD: Gentlemen I am sure you all noticed Mr. Wickersham's face as he performed that introduction. That malign glee that seemed to so fuse it, is something that I have been very familiar with. Since I have this appointment the situation is a great deal worse than he indicated. It is not merely that I haven't had any previous training for diplomacy, but that all my training has been in the opposite direction from diplomacy. For a long time, for 15 years now, I had trained myself to look up trouble wherever I can find it. Now, I have been training myself busily for a month or so in avoiding every conceivable kind of danger. One danger that I have to avoid now is Mr. Ely. These other gentlemen are perfectly free to avoid him; they don't have to play with Mr. Ely every day as I do. I have to go on therefore and say a few words at least about the topic which he gave to me, namely, Denmark.

There is one thing that I have found I can say about it without running into any possible danger of controversy and that is that that little country is at present and has been for a good while making 1 contribution for civilization that is peculiarly interesting and peculiarly important at the present moment. The world is facing a situation in which it can find no way out unless production is very greatly increased. With the debts that are on us, with the destruction of our capital, with the aggressive movement of labor in different parts of the world, mere redistribution won't do much for us unless we have more of production, so that it seems to me that the problem of increasing production is going to be the dominant problem of the future.

Denmark is a little country very largely agricultural, and those peasants who constitute most of the nation have worked it out themselves. They have worked it out with traditions which were normal, which came to them from nowhere else or came to them from their own experience and their cooperative associations have been expert associations. They have 1 association for keeping up the breed of cattle; they have another for keeping up the breed of horses; they have an association that looks after the seed. They have perhaps more important than all a control association or series of associations which enable any farmer who wishes to do so to put his whole business under the inspection of experts to see that every animal he has and every agricultural products that he has is up to the highest possible state of efficiency. That is a healthy thing and if we are going to meet the problem of the time, which we roughly call Bolshevism, which means a great mass of hasty new claims, impatient, badly digested, it is going to be through cooperation. Cooperation such as I speak of in Denmark is a definite, described and limited thing, but the spirit is the same. So I feel myself enthusiastic and happy that if the Senate of the United States agrees with the President in this case that I am going to a country in which on a small scale I shall see working out constantly, industrially and happily the spirit which I believe, taken in a wider sense, to be the only spirit in which we can find the salvation of the future. (Great Applause)

MR. WICKERSHAM: We come now to the main subject of this evening's gathering. It is a fortunate thing that we have been enabled to secure the presence here this evening of 3 men singularly well qualified to discuss this great subject which is before the world today.

It was said by old Dr. Andrew White that Grotius' book, brought forth just at the close of the Thirty Years War, when Europe had gone through the prolonged agony, in comparison to which even this great war seems something like a Sunday School picnic, exhibited in its main characteristics faith and foresight. Those are qualities I venture to believe are more required at this moment than at any time since the close of the Thirty Years War -- faith in the inherent good in human nature, which will not permit the infamies of the last 4 years again to be repeated, and foresight in providing a practical method of averting any such calamity again.

For the affirmative, in support of the project now before the country, it is my privilege to present to you the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, a Senator of experience, learning and vision, coming from the great Middle West -- Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska. (Great Applause)

First Speaker

The Honorable Gilbert M. Hitchcock

United States Senator from Nebraska

Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Mr. Toastmaster, Fellow Guests, and Members of the Club: It is a remarkable evidence of the great interest which intelligent people feel in the great question now confronting the world that most of those here present tonight have gathered for a second time to hear the pros and cons of

the issue presented. As the Toastmaster has said, it would be hard to overestimate the tremendous importance of this question.

For the first time in the history of the world the minds of all intelligent people in all the nations of the world are fixed upon one great issue -- a device to put an end to war.

This matter has been brought before the world in a very formal and definite way. While the war was still raging, in January of last year the president of the United States summoned Congress together and in a joint session of the two Houses he promulgated 14 points upon which peace should be made. One of those 14 points was the proposition that the nations of the world responsible for the future of the world should form a League of Nations.

That proposition of the President's was received by the two Houses with tremendous applause. It was received by the whole country with evidence approval. Great newspapers of both parties promptly gave it their assent, although I can name some in this City that are notable since that time for some tendency to backslide.

The Legislature of the State of New York, itself, Republican, on the very day following the recommendation of the President, overwhelmingly gave it their approval in a joint resolution passed by both Houses. Every nation engaged in war upon our side gave it approval, and it was months before any note of dissent was heard in the United States.

When Germany asked for terms and they were presented in the proper way, the proposition for a League of Nations was included in one of them and as a part of the armistice Germany has assented to the formation of the League of Nations, and again, when they granted this armistice to Germany all the nations engaged in this great war again put the stamp of their approval upon the idea of the League of Nations.

When the Council gathered in Paris, one of its first acts was formally to decide that the League of Nations should be made an integral part of the peace settlement. A commission was appointed representing 14 nations of something like a thousand million people and that commission in February unanimously reported a draft of the Constitution for a League of Nations back to the Council. For more than a month that great Constitution has been before the world, subject to the criticism, suggestion, and recommendation of intelligent people everywhere.

We have, therefore, the case of the first treaty in history formally and publicly presented to the world for criticism and comment, so that it is not a matter being done in an irregular way or in the dark, but it is a matter being done systematically with the full assent of all the nations involved.

Now the opposition that has developed to this is of a two-fold character. First, there is the opposition of those who do not believe in any League of Nations. It is unnecessary to spend

much time with those who take such an extreme view, who hold to the view that this should be a hermit nation, taking no part in the world. The time has gone by when the United States can be a hermit nation. It occupies too large a place in the world. It occupies the greatest place, the largest space of any nation of the world, and when any war shakes the earth it is bound to involve the United States no matter how long we may struggle to stay out of it.

The other opposition is the opposition of those who say, “Yes, we desire a League of Nations, but we don’t like this League. We desire a League of Nations but this goes too far, or this doesn’t go far enough, or it is this or it is that.” Now, those who take that critical position should be classed at once with those who oppose any League of Nations, because the solemn fact is, after all the preliminaries which I have described, that it is the League of nothing, this League or a return to the old method of war and preparation for war. It is this League or nothing, and I therefore shall make no distinction tonight between those who oppose the matter on principle and those who raise objections to the ratification of this League.

The time for theories has gone. I may have had my theories of what a League of Nations would be. The former great President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, earnestly and in a number of speeches advocated a League of Nations, a League of Righteousness, enforced with force behind it. Former President Taft is at the head of a great organization favoring a League to enforce Peace.

But none of these Leagues, none of these theories are before the country, are before the world.

What is before the world is a great compromise which has been reached by the representatives by 14 nations gathered there in Paris and if it is ratified it goes into effect. If it is not ratified despair spreads over the world and we return to the old conditions. We cannot amend it when it comes to us.

It may not be exactly the League that we would like. It is not exactly the League that France would like, because France wants a League with a military and naval force, or at least with the military staff. It is not the sort of league that Japan wants, because Japan wants one which will guarantee race equality and help people in that way. It is not exactly the League that Australia wants. It is a compromise of 14 nations of the world that participated in its creation.

It is like our Federal Constitution adopted so many years ago in the Constitutional Convention. That was a compromise. It suited almost no State, and when it came before the States for ratification it was fought desperately in almost every State, because it didn't represent the views of any particular State, but it was ratified and it went into effect, and it has proved the greatest governmental structure of the world, although we began to amend it almost as soon as we adopted it -- and we are still amending it. (Laughter) And so this great document, this great proposition is before the world and represents a compromise of the leading nations of the world that are willing to unite for the purpose of putting an end to war.

Now, I have told you something of what has been done. Let me pass for a few moments to a brief review of what the League is that is proposed. In the first place, it is not what it was predicted it would be -- a super-nation. It is not even a nation. It has no sovereign powers. It is not even a government. It is a great covenant or treaty between the nations of the world and its chief and most important feature consists of agreements that they make with each other as to what they will do and what they will not do as sovereign powers in the world.

Now, I say its most important features consist of the promises which the nations make when they enter into it. Let me review some of those promises.

Each member promises that if a dispute arises between it and another member it will not go to war with the other member but will either submit the dispute to arbitration or to an inquiry by the Executive Council. Now, both of these methods are acknowledged and accepted methods of adjusting difficulties. Many nations dislike to arbitrate. There are some questions which all nations refuse to arbitrate. If they can agree upon arbitration through the machinery that they agree upon or through the League's machinery, the question will be arbitrated and they agree that while it is being arbitrated for 6 months, they will have no war, and they agree that no war shall be fought until 3 months after the arbitration has been concluded, and they agree to abide by the result of the arbitration.

But if the question is not considered by them or by one of them as an arbitrable question, then they agree that they will submit it to an inquiry by the Executive Council, which I shall discuss later.

This inquiry occupies 6 months and all parties agree that during that time there shall be no war. They also agree that for 3 months after the conclusion of the inquiry there shall be no war.

We therefore have by these two devices, of the arbitration and the inquiry, an absolute guarantee that the nations forming this great compact that for 9 months, after diplomacy has failed, there shall be no war, and you know, gentlemen, I am sure that the Toastmaster knows, that 90% of the wars of the world could have been prevented if any such period of time for cooling off purposes had been provided. Why, the last great war from which we are just emerging undoubtedly would have been prevented if Germany could have been restrained for 3 days from plunging the world into war, and the rulers of the world and the diplomats of Europe struggled desperately even to secure a delay of the few hours knowing that the delay might save the day.

Now, a delay of 9 months is almost certain to prevent war, because it affords an opportunity for the peace sentiment of the countries to develop. It affords an opportunity for peaceful settlement, even if the dispute is not settled, and it will prevent a war 9 times out of 10.

So there we have the very practical device of arbitration and of inquiry, and even if both of them shall fail, then the cooling off period, which will save 90% of the wars of the world.

Now, these nations also agree that they will, when the arbitration occurs, submit to it, and so far as I know nations which in the past have agreed to arbitration have bowed to the decision of the arbitrators.

In this case of the inquiry the agreement is that if the Executive Council decides unanimously and makes a recommendation unanimously for the settlement of the dispute, the nation losing it will not go to war with any nation accepting it. That is the agreement which the nations all make, and that agreement for arbitration and for inquiry and for the 9 months delay constitute a device which, in my opinion, will prevent partially all of the wars of the world, although there are other devices in this document.

Now suppose a nation violates that agreement. I don't believe any nation in this League or any nation anywhere else in the world thereafter is going to treat an agreement as a "Scrap of paper." (Applause) I believe that the age of scraps of paper has passed and passed forever, and that hereafter solemn agreements are going to be enforced by the public opinion of the world. But suppose a member does violate the agreement, suppose it goes to war against another member of the League within the 9 months. What happens?

That act is treated as an act of war against every member of the League and then automatically one of the drastic provisions of the League goes into effect. Every member of the League dissolves all commercial, financial and personal relations with the recalcitrant nation, and institute what is a boycott, and practically a boycott of that nation and I want to say to this great audience that there is not a nation in the world with the possible exception of the United States that can withstand that tremendous pressure, that tremendous economic pressure. (Applause)

You saw what that pressure in a limited way did to Germany, although Germany was trading with the neutral nations of the world. Put all those nations with the League and let all of them dissolve those relations with any recalcitrant member and it means the paralysis of the offending nations, and it will be sufficient, as any intelligent person can see to bring that nation to time -- yes, better than that, the dread of it will be sufficient to prevent any nation if it desires to sink so low as to treat its obligation as a scrap of paper from doing so. (Applause)

Now, another promise which these League members make is that they will enter into no secret treaty and all treaties that are in existence that are contrary to this League are to be abrogated. The secret treaty has been a fruitful source of wars, as we all know, and if all treaties can be opened before the world one of the great causes for wars and disagreements in the future will be thereby removed.

What is another promise made in this League by each nation adhering too it? It is a promise in Article 10 to respect and preserve the political independence, the existing political independence

and the territorial integrity of every member of the League. That promise is the very cornerstone of the League. That guarantee of political independence to every member and guarantee of territorial integrity against outside aggression is the thing that makes the League desirable to the members that go into it. It means security and safety for the members. It is a guarantee which is of tremendous advantage to every member of the League and with the united strength of all of them it is of tremendous potency.

I should say here that I should have perhaps discussed somewhat more the form of the League, but I will proceed with the consideration of the promises. Another promise made by each member joining this League is that it will reduce armaments. Now this promise should be distinguished from a promise to reduce the military force, to reduce the number of trained men. It has nothing to do with universal training, it has nothing to do with the size of the army necessarily, but it does reduce those features of military strength which take time to create.

Sudden wars have been the bane of the world. They have only been possible when nations have accumulated great supplies of munitions of war, when they have constructed great works like Krupps and Essen in Germany in Germany, where through years and years of time, great quantities of artillery have been built and enormous armaments created ready for the sudden mobilization of the army or the sudden starting of war. Each nation joining this League promises to cooperate in reducing military armaments and in doing so it agrees that the Executive Council

shall advise and propose to the various nations the size of the armament which they ought to have or the reduction which they ought to make.

Now, I want to draw your particular attention to this because some of the most bitter antagonism to this League has been upon the theory that the Executive Council or the League itself proposes to dictate to the United States how much of an army it should have or how much armament it should have. All that the executive Council does is to propose to the various nations, members of the League, what amount of armament they should have, and that proposal does not go into affect until it is formally adopted by the various nations. That means that before it becomes binding upon the United States, Congress must give its approval to the change or to the limitation. We have been told that this was a surrender of our sovereignty that the Constitution vested in Congress the decision of these matters and that the League was taking it away from Congress. But the League takes nothing away. It only acts when the nations give their approval and give their formal adoption to the proposal of the League. Thereafter no change can be made without the consent of the Executive Council. We have been told that this was a surrender of our sovereign rights. Why, gentlemen, if this is a surrender of our sovereign rights, if it is a limitation of our armament, we lost that over 100 years ago.

It wasn't long after the second war with Great Britain, when we entered into a treaty with Great Britain formally limiting for all time the armament upon the Great Lakes, that border between the United States and Canada. (Applause) Today, where is suspicion to that agreement, and we

can only have a certain number of boats upon those lakes and so can Canada, and the amount of their equipment is nothing much more than popguns. Has anybody heard that we have surrendered our sovereignty? No. all we have done is to preserve a continuous peace with our neighbor on the north and saved ourselves and saved themselves millions and millions of dollars.

(Applause)

Now, let me glance a moment at the formation of the League. What is it? It starts out as an agreement between 14 nations. They form the League and they form a great body that has been known as the Body of Delegates, the name of which may be changed to some other more significant name. In this body of Delegates, each nation has 1 vote, although it may have 2 or 3 representatives. But this body of Delegates is not the important organ of the League. The important organ of the League is the Executive Council, which is composed of 9 nations. We may say that the Body of Delegates occupies a position similar to the body of stockholders in a corporation, and the Executive Council of 9 nations constitutes the Board of Directors, exercising all the powers that could be exercised by the stockholders, meeting much more frequently and functioning much more easily, and even having some powers that the Body of Delegates have not.

This Executive Council is the backbone of the League, and the backbone of the Executive Council is composed of the 5 great nations which fought and won this war -- the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan. In the Constitution they are made the 5 permanent

members of the Executive Council. The other 4 members are changeable and are elected by the body of Delegates; in fact, the chief duty of the Body of Delegates is from time to time to elect these 4 additional members of the Executive Council.

Now, the powers of this Executive Council are very much like the powers of the Supreme Council that has been meeting in Paris and conducting the affairs of these nations and a significant fact which we must remember carefully is that no great decision of this Executive Council and no great decision of the Body of delegates has weight as binding any nation unless it is unanimous.

Now this ends at once another objection which has been made against this League. We have been told that America with 100,000,000 people only had 1 representative on the Executive Council and in the Body of Delegates, but that the British Empire not only had a representative on the Executive Council but it might have all of its self-governing colonies members of the league -- Canada and Australia -- from which you come, Mr. Bradden -- South Africa and New Zealand, and we have been told that these 5 votes of the British Empire would have a tremendous advantage of the United States.

Well, upon the old theory that a majority should control that might be so, but it is not so in this League. This Executive Council in all votes, except a few especially provided, in all votes the decision must be by agreement, must be unanimous, and it is true of the Body of Delegates.

The decision to bind any nation must be unanimous, must be by agreement, and that puts an end to the idea of any number, any nation being at a disadvantage. But even if it were not so, I wouldn't be afraid of entrusting Canada and also Australia, great self-governing colonies like that, that are practically today Republics. We have more in common with Canada than Great Britain has. We do more business with Canada. We have almost -- I can say, more in common with Australia, Mr. Commissioner, and it is only a question of time, if those people will it and if the present tendency continues when they will be independent Republics. (Applause) they are only linked now to the mother country by sentiments. They only came to her relief in this war as a matter of sentiment, and I wouldn't be afraid even with the majority system of voting, I wouldn't be afraid of the results.

This League of Nations is based on good will and cooperation and a common purpose and it can only succeed as the nations succeed, to continue as they have begun, working to a common and end and for the common good, so that ends this story about being outvoted in the body of Delegates or in the Executive Council.

I have spoken of opposition. I don't want to speak harshly of opposition, because opposition has its rights. It is inevitable; it is beneficial, and it has probably been beneficial in this case. Some of the opposition has come from Great Britain; some of the opposition has come from France. Some of the criticism that comes from Australia has no doubt been beneficial. It was intended that

should come. That is the reason they made the Constitution public; that is the reason they have allowed a month or more for the world to consider this great document, and when it comes out as it will now in a very few days from the Council in Paris, we will find that it has stood the open test. It is coming out in very much the same form that it went in, clarified, strengthened, harmonized and made more than ever a compromise between the nations of the world to achieve a common purpose. (Applause)

Now, I am aware that there has been a little attempt to make politics out of this. I deplore it. I would deplore it among Democrats and quickly as among Republicans. This is the greatest question that humanity has ever faced. (Applause) We cannot afford to drag it down into politics. I honor the former President of the United States, William Howard Taft, for his stand. (Great Applause)

He has shown no mean spirit. He has to some extent given up a pet idea of his own, the glorification of the court of law in his League to Enforce Peace. He has brushed aside any possible political advantage that might be gained against the opposite party and he has come forward with strong arms to help sustain the President of the United States and to give him good counsel (Great Applause) and he is wiser in his day and generation than those smaller minds who think they find some political advantage in opposition.

I am reminded a little of a story of the man who went out to buy a horse and he found an animal that seemed to satisfy him and he agreed with the owner on the price but he said, "Has this horse any faults?" "Well," the owner said, "Yes, it has two faults." "Well, what are they?" "Well the first -- let us be fair," the seller said, "I will tell you one of the faults before you pay me the money and I will tell you the other fault after you pay me the money." (Laughter) "Well," the purchaser says, "that is fair. Now what is the first fault?" "Well," he says, "the first fault is that it takes me so long to catch him every day. I go out into the pasture to catch him and it takes me sometimes a half an hour or three quarters or a whole hour to catch him and bridle him. It wastes a lot of my time." "Oh, well," the purchaser said, "is that all" here is you money. Now, what is the other fault?" "Well," he says, "The other fault is that after you do catch him he isn't worth a damn". (Laughter)

Now, I want to say in all warning to those gentlemen who think they have a political issue in this great world question for the benefit of humanity they are likely to find that that is the kind of horse they have caught. (Applause)

I realize, Mr. Toastmaster, that we must face certain difficulties in coming to this League of Nations. I realize that there is some force when men rise and say, "How about the Monroe Doctrine?" America ought to reserve the Monroe Doctrine, they tell us. Well, I believe in the Monroe Doctrine. I think we have all believed in it. It has been a great benefit not only to the United States but to the Western Hemisphere. I would like to see it specifically reserved in this

document, if it were possible. I have no doubt that most of the pleas which have been made by American have impressed the President of the United States as worthy of serious consideration. I know that he carefully weighed these objections when he was over here. That is what he came here for in part. That is why the Constitution was spread before the American people, and he has gone back there to get all he can to meet American public opinion. (Applause)

But after all you must remember that we are only 1 of 14. We must give as well as take. We must remember that anything that is worth getting is worth paying something for. I learned a long time ago to look with suspicion when anyone tried to give me something for nothing. (Laughter) In my opinion we can afford to sacrifice some of the things that we have cherished in the past if necessary to get this greater thing than all others.

I don't know whether the Monroe Doctrine will be especially reserved or not. I don't want it reserved if we have got to make promises to Japan for her particular interest. I don't want it reserved if we have got to agree with France that there shall be a great standing Army and a navy at the disposal of this League of Nations. I don't want it reserved if it has got to sacrifice any of the great features which make this League so well worth having. But I know this: whether it is reserved or not, and that still hangs in the balance, whether it is reserved or not, there is nothing in the League of Nations that is inconsistent with the Monroe Doctrine.

What is the Monroe Doctrine? The Monroe Doctrine prohibits any of the nations of the old world from any forcible aggression against any country in the new world.

What is the League of Nations? It prohibits any nation from forcible aggression anywhere in the world, the Western Hemisphere or anywhere else. (Great Applause) The very idea of the League of Nations is to prevent aggressions upon another.

If this League of Nations with this Constitution has been in effect 100 years ago there would have been no Monroe doctrine, no occasion to proclaim it. So I say that that objection is one which I believe in meeting squarely and fairly and I believe that it is one that the American people will treat in the same way. We can afford, if necessary, to sacrifice the lesser in order to get the greater. (Applause)

We have been told that if we went into this League of Nations we would be in danger from Japanese immigration that Japan would insist upon making the immigration question a dispute with the United States and bring it before the League of Nations. Well, it is not an international question. It is a domestic question. We provide our immigration laws, and our marriage laws, and our real estate laws, and our election laws for the good of our own people and it is no concern of any nation in the world whom we admit or whom we refuse. (Applause)

But suppose now, just for the sake of argument, Japan should bring that question -- suppose the impossible should happen and it came before the Executive Council and suppose before the Executive Council, Great Britain, with Canada and Australia, as her particular offspring, both as violently opposed to Japanese immigration as the United States is opposed to it, suppose Great Britain should decide to vote in the Executive Council with Japan, that Japanese should be admitted to the United States. I say it is impossible, but suppose it, and you have got to have Great Britain because you have got to have a unanimous decision. Suppose the decision should be rendered, what then? Can the Japanese come in here if our laws are not changed? All we have agreed to do when we joined this League of Nations is not to make war; on the contrary it requires a unanimous decision. We wouldn't make any war on Japan. We would just simply refuse to admit them. What then? You can't force such a thing as that; there is no danger of it, but I can say to quiet the fears of any who have any such alarms as that, that it has never been contemplated that immigration or any other domestic question should come within the jurisdiction of the League of Nations. Not only that, but when that Constitution comes out of its final drafting, I am not much of a prophet, but I am willing to predict that it will have a specific provision in there excluding domestic questions, and that will save that objection.

Mr. Toastmaster, I don't know that I have covered in anything like a proper exposition what this League of Nations is. I have found generally when I have concluded that questions have arisen by reason of omissions that have been made, but I know this, that the American people have

made up their minds on the subject of the League of Nations. They have made up their minds that they will not tolerate in the future a continuation of the horrors of the past.

Think of it, almost since the time when nations were first formed they have devoted most of their revenues and levied most of their taxes not for the development of the country and not for the promotion of the welfare of the people, but in preparation for war and in waging war against other nations. That is a horrible fact. It almost speaks of the failure of civilized government. Can you wonder that Anarchy and Bolshevism and Socialism have developed? Can you wonder at the growing discontent with government everywhere when for all time governments seem to have made their chief efforts to destroy some other government?

Now, Mr. Toastmaster, I realize that in the past there probably has not been a time when a great proposal of this sort could be successful. I believe thee probably in the past has not been a time when the nations could have entered into an agreement of this sort with any degree or prospect for success, and why has it been? Because from all time the world has been cursed with autocratic government where a few men had the power of war or peace. It has been cursed with nations having the dream of conquest, the purpose of conquest. So long as they existed there wasn't much chance for such an agreement.

Do you realize, Mr. Toastmaster that we who were born in one era are going to die in another, just as absolutely as a man who might have been born in the Dark Ages and past into the period

when the Dark Ages were rolled away, just as absolutely as a man who was born before the Age of Chivalry may have lived into the Age of Chivalry, so we who were born in one epoch are to die in another.

When this war broke out, of the conquering nations of the world, of the nations ruled by autocrats, only 3 remained: Russia with her Czar and her dreams of conquest towards the Pacific and the South; Austria-Hungary with her autocratic form of government and her determination to press on to the southeast. In our day we saw her seize Herzegovina and Bosnia; the great German Empire with its dream of conquest of the world nursed for 50 years, we saw her seize Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, and Alsace-Lorraine from France -- when the war broke out those 3 great conquering empires in the hands of autocrats were all that remained of these nations of the past that had cursed the world with conquest and with war, were rolled now in the dust, gone and gone forever. (Applause)

We now have a world government of democracy. Our own government led in the establishment of democratic government. It was followed by Great Britain slowly converted into a self-governing country, and Great Britain is just as much self-governing today as we are; followed by the establishment of the French Republic; followed by Italy when it became a Constitutional Monarchy, and even Japan, though it has a Mikado, whom the Japanese revere, has a government which changes as often as the people of Japan change their mind. The power of

kings has gone. The King of England has not more power today than the painted king upon a deck of cards. He is the loved head of Great Britain and the British Empire; but he has no power.

Why, I read a little interview in the paper of a conversation between the President of the United States and the King of Spain when he was over there on his first visit and he was reported to have said to the King of Spain, “I should think your Majesty would make this change or that change” or some other changes that Mr. Wilson thought was desirable, (Laughter) and His Majesty answered, “Oh, Mr. President, you forget. I am not a President, I am only a King.” (Laughter)

So I say, gentlemen, that the time has come when these great self-governing countries in the world, led by the United States, can enter into a contract as businessmen can for their common good enter into a contract which is going to save them from the horrors of war and from the awful burden of preparing for war, because if this great proposal fails, if we fail to form the League of Nations, the peace that is to be signed in Paris will be merely a truce. All the nations of the world will go to work again preparing for war on a larger and more terrible scale than ever and it means taxation. Yes \, you have had some experience lately in making out your tax reports. You have only had a taste of what will come to this country if the League of Nations fails, because I tell you, gentlemen, that if war is to be on the program, if the nations of the world are to be prepared for war, this nation will never again be caught in a state of unpreparedness. (Applause) It will go to work on a greater scale than ever in preparing for the next war. It may

not come for 25 years, but you will have your taxes right off, and they will be huge. Where they have been a \$100,000,000, they will be a \$1,000,000,000, and it will not be a tax on consumption. Prohibition has ended a part of that force. The American people won't tolerate the raising of the great expenses of the government by taxes on the consumer. It will be a tax on the incomes of everybody having a \$1,000.00 a year or more, and it will be a tax on the profits of the corporation. You have all got a direct and personal and immediate interest in this great proposal in Paris, because it will enable the United States enormously to reduce its taxes. We will only have a volunteer army.

We have heard something about our boys being sent abroad to police turkey and other countries offensive to the public imagination, and that brings me to a point that I have forgotten, and that is the matter of mandatories.

As a matter of fact, the mandatory idea is an American idea. The President of the United States said it was wrong either for the German colonies or for any other people to become prizes of war, but that they, being human beings, should have the opportunity to work out their own salvation under the guidance of some other nation and he proposed therefore that the League of Nations take these helpless countries under its wing and through a trusteeship of a nation see that its government were properly carried on, but no nation is compelled to accept this trusteeship. The mandatory matter is a purely voluntary affair, and it will require a vote of Congress before the United States will undertake to accept the mandatory for any country, so there is nothing to

be alarmed about there. The League of Nations can't wish Turkey on us or any other impossible task for us to perform.

But, gentlemen, after all we perhaps have magnified these objections by referring to them. The American people are going to brush them aside. They have answered this question already. I heard the answer and I saw the answer on that November day last year when the first report came that the Armistice had been signed. As I stood in my office window in Omaha I saw a sight that amazed me, a sight I had never thought possible. I saw people pour out of the offices and come out of the stores and come out of the shops in their workaday clothes with hats and without. I saw them wild, fairly hysterical in their joy for what had happened. I saw them hug each other. I heard them shout. I heard them sing. I saw them actually drop on their knees on the sidewalk and send up prayers of gratitude, because they knew that their men-folks were safe -- their brothers and their fathers and their sons and their lovers. Such hysteria as beset the people of Omaha by the tens of thousands took the people of all cities in the United States, the great strain was removed. They knew that no more were to be maimed and sent home. They knew that no more were to be killed and lie in the tens of thousands of graves of France forever. They knew at last that their men-folks were safe and in their joy, in the wild hysteria I read and I heard the answer to the question: Do the American people want a device to make war impossible? I thank you.

(Great Applause)

MR. WICKERSHAM: The primary purpose of this meeting was to hear an expression of robust opposition to the League of Nations. At the last meeting the speeches in general, I think, perhaps in toto, favored the League. Now we have with us tonight a gentleman whose robust Americanism has found audible expression many times during the last 4 years; a man who stands pre-eminently for the assertion of vigorous American policies; a man whose voice was heard throughout the land favoring preparedness for war at a time (Great Applause) at a time when official utterances were counseling peace. Mr. Henry A. Wise Wood therefore may be expected to express the most robust and at the same time the most intelligent of American opposition to this project. He needs no further introduction from me. I take pleasure in presenting to you Mr. Henry A. Wise Wood. (Great Applause)

Second Speaker

Henry A. Wise Wood

One of the Founders of

League for the Preservation of American Independence

Mr. Toastmaster, ladies above and gentlemen below: I will tell you a secret. Senator Hitchcock is among the amenders. I have been following his speeches with great care during the last 2 or 3 weeks and have accumulated a large stock of clippings. I believe he has even suggested amendment by cable and it is said that he is in receipt of private advices from the other side.

Now, my very good and handsome friend, Senator Hitchcock, reminds me of a youth who, having committed himself to a brunette is quietly swapping her for a blonde amidst loud acclamations of affection. Since on St. Valentine's Day she made her debut, I have been carefully looking over Senator Hitchcock's brunette and I can truthfully say that I don't like her. I don't like her face and I don't like her manners, and I don't like the stiletto that she has tucked away in her stocking. Therefore, I don't blame the Senator for so skillfully unloading the lady as he has been doing recently. (Laughter) Now, I understand that the Senator's blonde has come to town and is concealed somewhere about the premises. Well, I think already he has been boasting that she is ineffably lovely. I hope that she is. I don't believe it. (Laughter)

I don't like the Senator's taste. I prefer to see the lady and judge for myself of her beauty and character. If she isn't more of a winner than the other, I can see he finish. (Laughter) I can see her successor on Mr. Hitchcock's arm coming down the Senate steps, a gentle Albino like creature, without an enemy in the world, and I can hear him whispering in her ear that she was his first and only love. (Great Laughter)

Now, I have not been invited here tonight to talk on affairs of the heart, but on the Constitution of the League of Nations. That is the only one of its Constitutions that can be seen with the naked eye. It is not the phraseology, I suspect, of that highly contentious covenant of peace in which you are interested, but in the contents. You wish to know whether this package done up in a copy

of the beatitudes, which is so eloquently offered you, contains a rabbit's foot or a stick of dynamite.

Well, let us see what there is in it and whether any pacificatory rabbit's foot is worth the price asked, which is, that we scrap our traditions, strike out National tent, and follow blindly into the untrod wilderness of Internationalism, where those who have never seen it say there lies a warless world to Utopia.

Before we proceed, let me fix in your minds, the American parts of your minds, three fundamental spiritual reasons why America should not attach her signature to a document which forever bars to others the gate through which she herself entered to set up independent National life.

First, that is eternally denies the blessings of liberty to all who are now without liberty. The second is that had this pact existed 150 years ago, our National anthem would not be, "The Star Spangled Banner" but "God Save the King. The third, is, that it makes of America, the world's foremost exemplar of freedom, Europe's overseer to help hold her shackled peoples chained.

Now, let us review what likely to have been our own history had this pact been in existence at the critical moments of our past. If it had existed in 1776, Europe would have been committed to let the American Revolution die. If it had existed in the early 40's, we should now be without, or

rather Texas could not have achieved her independence, we should now be without California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Had it been in existence in the early 60's it could not have prevented our sanguinary Civil War. It would have been useless to arrest what up to that time was the greatest war in history, and had this pact been in existence in '98, Cuba, denied her freedom would still be a festering sore at our gates.

Whether or not it would have prevented the war that has just closed is anybody's guess. My guess is that it would not have prevented that war, for the simple reason that the bad faith which caused a great group of nations to conspire in secrecy to break through one barrier of paper would hardly have permitted them to refrain from breaking through another barrier of paper. In the one case they fearlessly challenged the world; in the other case they would have had to do no more.

Now, my friends let me point out the error of supposing that any human agency can prevent warfare. If our statutes are powerless to prevent broken faith and violence among men, then how are the shadowy and weak provisions of this covenant to prevent violence and broken faith among nations? The law can punish; it cannot prevent--but International punishment is war, and war is what many people devoutly believe this Constitution will bring to an end.

Some men fervently believe that warfare is eradicable and that this Constitution will bring us endless centuries of peace. But even such enthusiasts must admit that whatever be the

arrangements arrived at by the nation, all history gives testimony to the fact that those arrangements can be no other than an armed association of nations which have agreed to keep the peace. Bad faith will still remain an incalculable element in human affairs.

What folly therefore to erect any league upon the hypothesis that warfare can be eradicated and war be brought to an end, and to deceive ourselves into believing that any trustworthy modifications in the combative nature of man can be accomplished by anybody of men however wise.

But to return to our history, it is instructive to note that one of the causes which brought on our war for independence was the fact that we were compelled to fight and to pay for in blood and money a long series of sympathetic wars. When Europe went to war over there, we went to war over here. When the British, the French, or the Dutch fought in the Eastern Hemisphere, we fought in the Western Hemisphere. Having broken away from Europe for that cause, shall we bind ourselves again to her quarrels and commit ourselves to engage in sympathetic wars in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and perhaps in Central and South America.

Now, let us come to the contents of the document that we are discussing and judge of the desirability of this or any other Constitution that may be offered us by the effects of its substance upon our traditional national policies. Gentlemen, let us give up shotgun methods of considering this document and use the rifle of our intelligence. Let us consider this document as if it were a

legal contract offered us by an attorney for our signature by which we are to dispose of an inheritance. If the substance of a Constitution of the League of Nations respects our institutions and is useful, let us accept it. I am wrongly classed among those who want no League of Nations. I say, if the Constitution of the League of Nations respects our institutions and is useful, let us accept it, (Applause) but if it tends to destroy them or injure them, then whatever be its promise, we must amend or reject it. (Applause) I have on face in mind when I say what I am going to say and that is the face of that boy's father. (Pointing to young Theodore Roosevelt) (Great Applause)

We cannot any more have two sovereignties than we can have two flags. (Applause) Now, in order that we shall be able to apply this test with reasonable accuracy to the terms of the existing or the forthcoming covenant, I offer for use the following set of what we engineers would call "Tolerance Gauges." Let us have some fixed principles in our mind by which we can say, "That is wrong" to the provisions of this document, or to the provisions of the document that is going to be handed to us very shortly. Let us know beforehand what we will accept and what we will not accept, and one of the reasons for the great success of Theodore Roosevelt was the fact that he always knew what he wanted to do before he undertook to do it. He knew before a proposition was presented to him whether or not he would accept or reject it, because he had certain fundamental principles.

Now, if we in America have certain fundamental principles that we can use as gauges to test our actions and the propositions that are going to be presented to us by an old, wise, and skillful Europe, now that we, a perfectly inexperienced and toddling child are in the hands of men on the other side, my friends, you have got to have some gauges by which you can determine whether or not you will accept that thing which is going to be put up to you very shortly, when the White House is put on wheels and goes trundling over this country, and people stand under the spell of its music, and may in a moment of impulse, even of hysteria, say, “Yes” to something, as we sometimes do when we approach the altar, (Laughter) and regret it afterwards. (Laughter)

Now here are the gauges: Does a provision require us to guaranty the territorial integrity and political independence of foreign States, -- which means to fight for those things-- I say, and here is our first gauge, it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected. (Applause) If Senator Hitchcock says the new and the coming agreement is not going to require this of us, I say, “bully, all right, I am not against it then on that ground,” but keep it in your mind as one thing to apply.

Your second is: Does this Constitution require us to send our men to administer police and guard distant foreign peoples; -- it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

Our third test: Does a Constitution require us to engage in wars at the command of governments other than our own; -- it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

Fourth: Does a Constitution require us to jeopardize our right to frame our own immigration and labor laws; -- it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

Fifth: Does a Constitution require us to cease doing business with the people of any nation at the command of a group of foreign governments; -- it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

Sixth: Does a Constitution require us to permit a group of foreign governments now or at any time to regulate the growth of the Army and Navy of the United States? If there weren't ladies here I should express this differently. It is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

(Laughter)

Seventh: Does a Constitution require us abandon or modify the safeguards of the Monroe Doctrine, -- it is offensive to our institutions and must be rejected.

And finally: Does such a document require us in this or any other respects to surrender the rights of free and independent States, which are said by the Declaration of Independence to be -- I quote -- "Full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all the other acts and thing which independent States may of right do," -- and gentlemen, when you hear the Declaration of Independence read you ought to stand on your feet, (applause) I say that when any paper emanating on the other side comes to this side for ratification by the

Senate, that asks us to scrap that paper, that document is incompatible with the maintenance of our liberties and must be amended or rejected. (Great Applause)

Now in the foregoing sketch, I have dealt with but 1 of 2 exceedingly grave perils which confront our beloved country. The other contains the more dire threat against the permanence of our form of government. I refer to the dangers which lurk in the usurpation of power by a chief executive. (Applause)

If -- now, gentlemen, carry these 3 thoughts away in your minds -- if in our Republic, the barrier that separates democratic government from autocratic rule, is so unresisting a bar that a gun-shy but determined man has easily pushed it aside, what may not be our fate if there should ever happen upon the Presidency one of those colossal figures which occasionally occur in history?

Now let us ask ourselves that as Americans who are breeding American, who in turn will breed American, and for whom we hold our rights in trust, I say you have no right to sign that paper. (Applause) You do not hold your citizenship in fee, you are trustees. You don't dare, you don't dare!

Now, I say, is it not well, let me ask you in conclusion, that we should profit by our first experience of the kind, and devise a new check that may be readily applied when needed to divest of authority a President who abuses his power? (Applause)

With 6,000 years of recorded history to draw upon for guidance, we are compelled at last to confess our inability to provide a practicable method of estopping the erection of a dictatorship. I want that to sink in. After less than a century and a half of national life we are contemplating the relinquishment of the rights by reason of which we are an independent nation of free men. I have no political aspirations, gentlemen, I have never held a political office, and thank God I never want to hold one, therefore I can tell you the truth, whether you like it or whether you don't, (Applause) and so after a century and a half of national life we are here tonight contemplating the relinquishment of the right by reason of which we are an independent nation of free men. I say what a sad commentary upon the permanence of national government! Out of 6,000 years of recorded history, my friends, we are the oldest Republic. No Republic in the whole history of the world has lasted so long as we have and we stand here tonight without power to arrest a dictator, and we sit here tonight contemplating the surrender of certain national rights. I say what a commentary upon the permanence of popular government.

Thank you very much. (Great Applause)

MR WICKERSHAM: on the eve of this terrible surrender, (Laughter) this task of the ancient Republican Gods, we have fortunately a gentleman here who may somewhat reassure us. (Laughter) he is not a representative of the party of the dictator, himself has been rather a protest against political dictation in the past, and is a representative of forward looking bodies of political thinkers. Senator Lenroot of Wisconsin, (Applause) comes to give us neither complete

applause nor black despair, and I apprehend from him some discriminating criticism which will aid in our sane judgment of the matter before us. I call upon Senator Lenroot of Wisconsin.

(Great Applause)

Third Speaker

The Honorable Irvine L. Lenroot

United States Senator from Wisconsin

Mr. toastmaster, guests, members of the club, ladies and gentlemen: In my discussion of this question tonight I shall not attempt to reply directly to my distinguished colleague, Senator Hitchcock, or follow the course of his argument, much as I would like to do so, but I realize that it would be unfair to attempt that course when the first speaker has no opportunity for reply in rebuttal. (Applause) Therefore, what I have to say upon the subject, although it necessarily will meet many of the arguments that have been made of him, would be made in exactly the same way if Senator Hitchcock had not spoken at all.

I know however that he will permit me to register agreement with one statement that he made near the close of his splendid speech, and that was as to the power of the President being greater than that of any king. I agree that that has been true since 1914, (Applause and Laughter) but I will say to him and for the consolation of Mr. Wood, that if the President shall sometime in the

future call a special session of Congress, (Laughter) that I think representative government will at least in a measure be restored. (Great Applause)

In my discussion of this question I shall endeavor to analyze the Constitution as originally presented. I do that for two reasons: first, because although we know now that many important and substantial modifications will be made before it is again made public, we do not yet know exactly what their form will be, and secondly, because I wish to show how well grounded was the protest of the alleged round-robin, signed by 39 Senators, and made by distinguished men in all walks of life to this Constitution as originally proposed. (Applause)

It has already been demonstrated that they have rendered a great public service in that protest (Applause and I am surprised, I am surprised beyond measure to have proponents of this Constitution in its original form denounce those who have said they are not in favor of it as originally proposed and have suggested amendments.

It is a curious thing indeed, sir, that if in Paris the neutral nations can be invited, as they have been invited, to suggest amendment to this Constitution, that neither the Senate, the Constitutional Advisers of the President upon treaties, nor the American people have been asked to suggest any amendments. (Great Applause)

Now, I am in favor of the League of Nations; (Great Applause) I am in favor of the general outline and plan of this proposed Constitution, (Great Applause) but we should not be deceived into the belief that either this League of Nations or any League of Nations will insure against war. No League of Nations can do that because so long as selfishness is a part of human nature, so long as people differ in ideals, in forms of government and in racial characteristics, there will be a probability of war. Neither should we be deceived into believing that promises and covenants alone will prevent war.

We were all shocked by the violation of neutrality of Belgium by Germany, of her regarding that treaty as a scrap of paper, but as the aims of the German autocracy unfolded themselves before us, we were not surprised, because they set out to dominate and to conquer the world, and with that purpose who could expect a nation to regard a solemn promise? And so we must reckon upon the probability that in the future there may be nations again bent upon conquest and although they may enter into covenants and promises, that whenever the time may come, when any combination of nations bent upon conquest feel themselves strong enough to conquer this world, that again war is probable.

There is, however, another class of wars that I believe can be in nearly every case prevented by a League of Nations, and that is where they occur through honest disputes between nations where the people of each believe that they are fighting for justice and right. If in such a Constitution as is here proposed, the nations will agree to submit their quarrel either to arbitration or to the

League of Nations, and agree that they will not go to war until 9 months after the submission, in the vast majority of cases they will have had time to cool off in that 9 months, and the will, in the vast majority of cases, settle the dispute without going to war at all. (Applause)

Reference has been made of the cost to the United States if we do not enter a League of Nations. I may surprise you by the statement that I am about to make, and I do not make it as any objection to the League of Nations, for it is not, but in my judgment, if we enter this League of Nations it will cost the American people more money than if we stayed out, especially during the next 50 years. (Applause)

But America must assume obligations and responsibilities, and I do not urge that as opposition to this League, but we ought to understand just what we are getting into. The claim is made that under this League of Nations small armies and small navies will be all that is required, and well, gentlemen, do you know that at this very time, President Wilson and his Secretary of Navy, are recommending a Naval program double the 3 year program adopted by Congress when the world was at war? And do you know that on December 30th last, Secretary Daniels appeared before the Naval Committee of the House of Representatives and urged this tremendous program for the reason, as he stated, and I have the language here, for the reason that he expected we would enter into a League of Nations, which would throw upon us vast responsibilities, requiring enormous expenditures. He said in that testimony that in that League of Nations we would be required to furnish, and he said we would be ashamed not to furnish, a Navy for policing the seas equal to

that contributed by any other nation. That meant, of course, that in the opinion of the Administration that with this League of Nations the United States should have a Navy as large as Great Britain has.

Now, I am in favor of a Navy commensurate with any needs. I am in favor of a Navy second only to the Navy of Great Britain, but I am not in favor of our attempting to surpass Great Britain if we stay out of the League, nor am I in favor of equaling her Navy if we go in and share with Great Britain the policing of the seven seas of the world. Upon her territory the sun never sets and the job of policing it is hers and not ours. (Great Applause)

May I say a word with reference to the approach of the consideration of this question? I wish very frankly to say to you that I approached from the standpoint of an American and in consideration of America's rights. I know this has become old-fashioned in some quarters to consider this question from the standpoint of America first. Those of us who do so are called selfish and narrow, but gentlemen, I can't forget that only a few months ago one of the greatest virtues was to be for America first and there are men in our penitentiaries tonight who were not. (Applause) I am for America first in the consideration of this and all other questions, because I believe that in best serving the interest of America, we can best serve the interest of mankind. (Applause)

Also with reference to the question of partisanship in the consideration of this question: any man who considers for one moment party affiliation in the consideration of this question second only in importance to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States is unworthy of American citizenship. (Applause)

I am sorry that in some quarters, because Republicans generally have been more outspoken than Democrats, that Republicans have been charged with that partisanship. That gentlemen, is most unjust. The only reason why Republicans have been more outspoken than Democrats is because President Wilson happened to be the leader of the Democrat Party. And inasmuch as partisanship has been spoken of, I wish to make this statement, that in my most deliberate judgment, that if it was not for partisanship in the Senate of the United States, there would not be half a dozen Democratic Senators favoring the adoption of this Constitution in its original form.

No. this question ought not to be dragged into party politics. Prominent Republicans are supporting President Wilson's views and prominent Democrats are opposing them, and I hope that at no time in the future will it be necessary to make this a political issue, because if it ever shall become necessary, the issue will be between Internationalism and Americanism.

(Applause)

Coming now to an analysis of the Constitution, I shall discuss at length only those articles that I believe should be modified. The first 7 articles I have only two observations to make concerning.

These 7 articles relate to the organization of the League. Under Article 3 it is provided that the Executive Council shall consist of the 5 great powers -- United State, Great Britain, Italy, France and Japan, and 4 other states to be selected by the delegates in such manner and upon such principles as they may see fit. In its original state and as it stands today for all we know, the 9 members of that Executive Council have perpetual membership. Now mark that. Now, the reason that I especially object to that is this: We must look forward to the time when Germany will have a stable democratic government, and by reason of her position in the nations of the world, we must look forward to the time when she will be entitled, to a place upon this Executive Council. If we do not, then in time to come, instead of this being a world League of Nations, it will be nothing but an alliance, and again the old balance of power, because when Germany once gets herself into a position where she is entitled recognition, we have got to treat her fairly or there will be another league formed against this League. (Applause)

But the cables tell us that his Article 3 is to be amended so as to provide expressly that of these 4 states they may be elected by the Delegates from time to time, which is as it should be.

The next observation that I wish to make is with reference to the voting power of the Delegates. AS has been stated there are 14 nations in the first instance that will sign this covenant. They are the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Brazil, China, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Czecho-Slovak, Serbia, Belgium and Poland. Each one of these Delegates each entitled to 1 vote. Each one of them will have 1 vote in this League of Nations. Under this Constitution the vote of

the United States will weigh just as heavily upon the tremendously important question of peace, or will weight just as heavily and no heavier than the vote of Romania, than the vote of Greece, than the vote of Portugal.

Do you think that is fair? That becomes especially important with the Constitution as originally proposed, because under Section 12 it contemplates that a majority vote will govern, while it is true under Section 15 it is expressly provided as to disputes there it must be unanimous.

I understand, as you do, that this is one of the amendments that has been agreed to, that all votes shall be unanimous, and if that be true, no great harm perhaps can come. I said the votes would all be unanimous, with one exception, which has already been referred to, that of self-governing dominions who each shall be entitled to 1 vote, and that means, as has been stated, that Great Britain will have 6 votes to the United States' 1 -- 1 for the British empire, 1 for the Dominion of Canada, 1 for New Foundland, 1 for Australia, 1 for New Zealand and 1 for South Africa.

Now, the objection to that has been belittled. I am not going to argue whether it is a desirable thing to have any nation, however friendly it may be to have 6 times the voting power than the United States has. (Applause)

The next article is Article 8, relating to disarmament, and I have no objection to this article. We should clearly understand that Article 8 does not insure and will not insure disarmament of the nations. My only point in referring to this is to express my regret, not my opposition, express my

regret that Article 8 did not in some manner insure disarmament of the nations, because greater than any League of Nations that may be devised, as a preventative of war would be the disarmament of nations now. You will remember the 4th of President Wilson's 14 points, which declared that adequate guarantees should be give and taken for the reduction of armament to the lowest point consistent with permanent safety. Under this article all that is required is for the Executive Council to formulate a plan to be recommended to the nations, members of the League, but the plans cannot be effective until the nations adopt them, and no nation, especially the United States, but no nation would be insane enough to adopt a plan for disarmament so long as there was one power either within or without the League that had not adopted it. That is the plan, and if the Peace Council now sitting at Paris cannot agree upon a plan for disarmament at the end of this terrible war with the horrors of it fresh in their minds, with devastated France before their eyes, if they cannot agree upon disarmament now, what hope think you is there for disarmament at some time in the future? (Applause)

I next come to Section 10 and that is a section I hope you will bear with me. It has been said to be the cornerstone of this League of Nations. I hope that is not so. I don't agree with it, with the statement, because if it is, it has a most unsafe foundation. Article 10 reads, "The high contracting parties undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all states, members of the League." President Wilson has stated that this war was fought to make the world safe for democracy, but under this

article, as it stands, it makes the world just as safe for despotism wherever it exists as it does for democracy.

On the 28th of February I stated to the Senate, and Mr. Wood tonight has stated in different words the same thought, that if in 1776 there had been a league of Nations, with this Constitution as originally present, there never would have been a United States of America; there never would have been a “Star Spangled Banner” and we tonight would still be one of the dominions of Great Britain, because under Article 10, France couldn’t come to our aid, Europe would not have been in war or threatened with war, and England would have been free to amass her troops and crush that little revolutionary army in a few months.

If following the Revolutionary War and prior to the Mexican War, a League of Nations had been created with this Article 10 in its Constitution, most of California, Colorado, all of New Mexico and Arizona would tonight be possessions of Mexico, and we would have guaranteed to defend her in the control of those possessions.

If following the Mexican War and prior to the Spanish American War, a League of Nations had been created with this Article 10 in it, Cuba and the Philippine Islands tonight would still be colonies of Spain. We would have guaranteed to have gone to war with any nation that might have attempted to do what we did for Cuba. We had no selfish purpose there, we went in to free that struggling people, to gain liberty for it, but if there had been a League of Nations with this

Article 10 in it, if we fought at all, we would have pledged ourselves to have fought upon the side of Spain and of tyranny.

Do you wonder that I object to Article 10 in its present form? If Turkey should be admitted to this League and if Armenia would remain a part of Turkey, instead of being independent as she will be, the Sultan of Turkey could massacre Christians at will and the United States, the League of Nations, nor could any other nation interfere and say “Stop”. If we fought at all we would be compelled to fight upon the side of the Sultan of Turkey. My friends, if that be making the world safe for democracy we will need a new definition of democracy. (Applause)

Now, I would like to see this amended, if it is to remain in the Constitution at all, so as to provide that our guarantee shall extend only so long as the people or the members of the League are self-governing people. If either at the time in the future despotism shall exist or arise I don't want the united States of America to be compelled to fight to sustain despotic government. (Applause)

I recognize that it will be necessary for some kind of an agreement for some years to come to maintain the existing boundaries that shall be finally formed by the Peace Conference, but I thoroughly approve of Senator Root's proposed amendment whereby at the end of 5 years any nation may relieve itself of this guarantee upon 1 year's notice.

The next articles that I shall discuss and very briefly are 12, 13 and 15, which I shall discuss together, and are the ones relating to disputes between nations.

Articles 12 and 15 seem to both cover the same subject. I have read them a great many times and I have finally come to the conclusion that they must have been drafts prepared to cover the same subject, made by different parties, and the Commission couldn't agree upon which they shall choose and so they selected both of them, because as I have said, under Article 12 it contemplates a majority vote, under Article 15 it contemplates a unanimous vote. But we find 3 disputes that are placed within the jurisdiction of the League. Article 15 expressly states that any dispute between nations that may lead to a rupture are place within the jurisdiction of the League, and if the English language still means what it used to mean, it means immigration, it means tariff laws, it means any domestic question concerning which any foreign nation may raise a dispute about. There can't be any question about it; there can't be a shadow of a doubt about it.

Oh, but the answer is that a unanimous vote, that it requires a unanimous vote; that we will not be injured. Well, I don't care to submit to any League of Nations a domestic question that is our business and not theirs and get a majority vote against us, (Applause) because if you do it will be a prolific cause of war, instead of this League of Nations being designed to prevent war.

Now, it also involves the Monroe Doctrine, and the Monroe Doctrine is very often erroneously stated. It is very often state that the Monroe Doctrine is the doctrine that no foreign nation shall by forcible aggression secure territory in the Western Hemisphere. Why, my friends, you remember that is not the Monroe Doctrine at all. The Monroe Doctrine is that what it originally was and still is; that no foreign national shall acquire territory in the Western Hemisphere and place here in the Western Hemisphere its forms of government. (Applause) It may be by purchase and it is just as much in conflict with Monroe Doctrine as if the territories gained be by conquest. (Applause)

And let us see the case of Japan, but with this Constitution in its original forms and ratified, agreed to by us, Japan could the next day buy Lower California, establish a Naval base there, and we would have surrendered any right to protest except to the League of Nations.

Now, Senator Root's proposed amendment on this subject, which is in substance the reservation that we made to all of The Hague Convention Treaties, protects not only the Monroe Doctrine but all domestic questions as well, and I want to make this prediction to you. It has been stated that it is uncertain whether a reservation can be made in this Constitution of the Monroe Doctrine. I say if it is not made that when it comes to the Senate it will be made by the Senate of the United States before it is ratified. (Great Applause)

Just a word with reference to Article 16. Because I haven't the time to discuss it at length I am only going to refer to one phase of Article 16, where the governments agree to share the financial losses occurring through the boycott that is there provided. Talk about the cost to this country of a League of Nations under this original Constitution? There will be trouble in the Balkan States which you can predict so long as you and I live, unless we have a very large army as a police force there to keep the peace. It will be necessary more than once to evoke the boycott, the economic boycott. Who trades with the Balkan States? Not the United States to any great extent, but under Article 16, if Italy, Great Britain and France are losing money by the boycott, the United States says, "We will share with you."

The next article is Article 17 relating to the adjustment of disputes between a nation member of the League and a nation not a member and the last paragraph relates to disputes between two nations neither of whom are members of the League and it provided that this Executive Council may take jurisdiction of this dispute and settle it, a dispute that may not involve war, a dispute where neither of the parties may have any thought of war, and yet Article 17 confers jurisdiction upon this Executive Council to take jurisdiction of disputes between two nations without their consent, neither of whom are members of the League. If that be a sample of democracy, what is despotism? (Applause)

I now come to Article 19, the mandatory article, and I think I will be able to show you what has been said, that in its original form, Turkey is going to be wished on to the United States.

(Laughter) Now, the article provides that these people lately liberated and not strong enough to stand along should be under the tutelage and guardianship of the nation members of the League, known as mandatories, and a specific recital is made of the communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire, and then follows “The wishes of these communities must be the principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power.” The next paragraph relates to the communities of Central Africa and the third paragraph relates to the communities of Southwest Africa and the South Pacific Islands, but in these two paragraphs you haven’t anything with respect to the wishes of the community as to who their guardians should be; not a word. Is it because Great Britain was perfectly willing to assume the guardianship of Africa and the South Pacific Islands? But who wants to be the guardian of Turkey? (Laughter) Does Great Britain? No. Does France? No. Does Italy? Of course not, no. And so we find the language, the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power.

You remember President Wilson’s speech at Boston upon his return from Europe wherein he said that no nation in Europe is suspicious of the United States. That is true. We glory in the fact that it is true, that there is tonight sitting around the Peace table at Paris one nation that has no selfish motive, that seeks no advantage for herself and that nation is the United States of America. (Great Applause)

But can that be said of any other nation sitting around at the peace table today? And then you remember in the Boston speech President Wilson said, “Whenever it is necessary to send soldiers to any place over there, they ask for American soldiers. (Laughter)

We solemnly obligate ourselves in the case of Turkey to accept her guardianship, the people liberated from turkey, to accept the guardianship if they ask us to. That is what it means; the wishes of the people shall be the controlling consideration. Who will they ask for? Uncle Sam, of course (Laughter) Why, Albania only a little while ago said they would like to have the United States. Every one of them will want the United States. I don’t blame them, and so far as Turkey is concerned unless we propose to treat this covenant if we ratify it as a scrap of paper, we would be obligated to assume the guardianship of Turkey, and the sick man of Europe, instead of being upon the backs of European countries would thereafter be upon the back of the United States.

I don’t believe that the fathers and mothers of America are willing to send their boys through all the years to come to keep the Sultan of Turkey at peace, through all the years to come to keep peace in the Balkan States, and I am only going to refer to one other article or lack of article, and that is the perpetual character of this covenant.

As this Constitution stands, if we once ratify it, we are in it forever, unless we wish to be in the position that Germany was of violating a solemn covenants, because it is an elementary principle

of International Law that treaties are perpetual unless there be either a limitation of time in the treaty or a right of the members of it to withdraw.

In 1907 you remember that we had 14 treaties or conventions as the Hague Conference. Out of those 14, 2 of them had a time limitation, 1 for 7 and the other for 12 years. The other 12 of them each had an article in them providing that upon 1 year's notice any nation a party to the convention could have the right to withdraw from the convention upon giving 1 year's notice to The Hague. That certainly ought to be in this Constitution. I am glad that the cables have carried the news, I hope it is true, that this amendment will be made so that there will be the right of withdrawal upon 2 years notice. I would rather it would be 1, but surely the United States ought not to be forever bound to an experiment the result of which may curtail the rights and the liberties of the American people for all time to come.

I am in favor of all the amendments suggested by Senator Root, and in addition this Article 19, known as the mandatory article, clearly must be changed, so as to make it optional with the nation as to whether it will accept the mandatory or not. It surely is not optional now so far as Turkey is concerned, unless we wish to violate a solemn obligation. Now, with reference to the treaty when it comes again to the Senate: I hope it will be in such form that I can vote for its ratification and that the Senate may ratify it, but I want to say to you very frankly that I will not be coerced into voting for it if I believe that its provisions are disastrous to the interests of the United States. (Great Applause)

If need must be, if the president should peradventure refuse to enact a treaty that meets with approval of the American people and the Senate, the Senate cannot be coerced upon the theory that it is the only way to end the war, because Congress alone under the Constitution is given the right to declare war and surely the body that has been given the right to make war has the right to repeal its own action and end the war. (Great Applause) True, such a resolution would have given to the President the right to veto it, but then he would take the responsibility, not Congress, and Congress when it comes back could by a two-thirds vote pass it over his veto. I hope we will never come to any such pass. I hope that such amendments will be made so that it will safeguard the rights and interests of the American people, and it does, it will be ratified by the Senate of the United States.

As to whether this Constitution in its original form did surrender or does surrender rights of the United States of supreme importance, I will call no less a witness than President Wilson himself. In his speech in this City at the Metropolitan Opera House on the 5th of March, the day before sailing for France, you will remember that after discussing the suspicion which the European nations had had of the United States prior to our entering into the war, President Wilson said, “Our sweet revenge therefore is that we believe in righteousness and we are ready to make the supreme sacrifice by throwing in our fortunes with the fortunes of men everywhere.”

The supreme sacrifice -- as President Wilson said -- he was not referring to the sacrifice of more than 50,000 of our boys upon the battle fields of France. He was not referring to the sacrifice of the yet greater thousands of our boys who have come back crippled and shattered in health. He was not referring to the sacrifice of the \$35,000,000,000 that this war has cost us. He speaks of a supreme sacrifice yet to be made, greater than all these and he states what it is -- throwing in our fortunes with the fortunes of men everywhere.

I commend President Wilson for his candor, because in its original form that is what this Constitution very largely does and when we are asked to place the United States into a melting pot of nations, some people trusting that out of it may come something better than we had before, shall we stand silent and not object? The supreme sacrifice of throwing our fortunes in with the fortunes of men everywhere!

My friends, what has made America great in the past? What is it that makes her the most dominant factor in the world? It is because she has been and is tonight free and independent, achieving her own ideals and serving the best interests of mankind.

Possibly, possibly President Wilson is right when he says that we entered this war to make the world safe with democracy. Perhaps he is right, but I don't believe it. Unfortunate, though it may be that the American people are on any such high plane as that, I believe that we entered this war to make democracy safe in the United States. (Applause)

Fifty thousand, nearly sixty thousand of our boys are sleeping under the sod of France tonight. Perhaps they fought and died, thinking that they were fighting to make the world safe for democracy, but I think that the last thoughts of those boys were rather of home and loved ones and Old Glory flying above them. I think that they fought and died believing that it was necessary to preserve the liberty and the independence gained for us at such great cost upon so many battle fields, and so believing, I cannot vote for a Constitution if in my judgment it surrenders what I believe those boys died for. Rather, it is for us to preserve and to protect them so that for all time to come Americans may continue to sing with heart and with voice, “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty,” and the “Star Spangled Banner, long may it wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.” (Great Applause)