

Sinnott's Masterly Address On the Campaign Issue— The League of Nations

(Continued From Yesterday)

That was President Wilson's contribution,—and I understand, his only contribution, to the league. What does that article mean? Here is a solemn obligation by which the members themselves make an individual engagement to go to the assistance of every member of the league in case of external aggression. They also agree to respect and preserve the territorial integrity of existing political independence. What does that mean?

I am not here to begrudge England what she has secured in this treaty. I admire her statesmanship that fought for what they considered were England's rights. I admire the part that England has played in the war. I would also like to be in the position to eulogize some American statesman who was over there and fought a good fight for American rights and American interests.

What does England get out of the treaty. She gets a territory more than 1-3 the size of the United States; 18 times the size of Oregon; a territory larger than all the western states with the addition of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas; and under his treaty,—under article 10, we are compelled to go to her assistance in case any other country engages in warfare with her, disrespecting her independence or committing an act of aggression.

And as I said before, we would have to go to the assistance of Japan, in case China endeavored to wrest back her territory.

Therefore, the senate of the United States reserves the right in the Congress of the United States,—not in one man alone,—to say whether or not our armies and our navies shall

be sent abroad to protect the territorial integrity of any member of the league of nations in case of war.

President Wilson says this article,—article 10,—is the very heart of the league of nations, and we are told that although the positive language of this article is that we are to respect and preserve the territorial integrity of the members of the league, still there is not a binding legal obligation to do so, because the power of declaring war rests in congress. You cannot make a treaty that is binding on our congress. The congress of the United States may ignore every treaty that has ever been entered into,—but they are not going to do that. To do so would be to dishonor our nation, to violate our obligation. If we enter into any treaty, we are going to fulfill the obligations imposed upon us in that treaty.

President Wilson says that only a moral obligation is imposed in this article 10. A moral obligation is, of course, he says superior to any legal obligation, and I may say, has a greater binding force there also remains the right to exercise judgment as to whether the treaty binds us to do that thing.

Senator Knox cited a specific violation of article 10, and asked President Wilson what would be our legal obligation,—whether we would be bound to participate in the event of war. "No sir," replied the president, "but we would be under a compelling moral obligation superior to a legal obligation." And that compelling obligation could be imposed upon us by the vote of one man, our representative in the league of nations.

So we have the reservation which I have stated, that the armies and navies of the United States,—your

boys,—should not be sent to war until the representatives that you elected,—your senators and representatives,—determined that war was necessary.

There are today some 12 or 15 wars being waged in Europe; and the league of nations now has 29 members.

Earl Gray says that the league of nations is ineffective because the potent voice of the United States is missing. I say, not the potent voice of the United States but the American money and the boys,—your children,—are missing from the European warfare.

It would be an easy matter to test out this league of nations, and the sentiment throughout the country in regard to it. If this league of nations were in operation our boys would be over in Russia, and over in Poland, trying to settle their affairs. But the president can have a real test. Let him call congress together, and let him ask congress for troops to send over to Poland. What would be your response? That would be one scheme for putting the league of nations in operation. You would hear a roar of protest and objections that would shake the very pillars of the country. Every member of congress would have from a hundred to a thousand telegrams of protest against sending our boys

to Europe, to foreign lands.

There is another reason why the senate put in this reservation that the army and navy of the United States could only set in motion by act of congress.

That reason is this: The members of the league of nations undertake to respect and preserve against external aggression, etc. It is not now necessary for a declaration, which only congress can make, to set in motion our armies and navies. Who set them in motion in Mexico? Who sent the navy to Vera Cruz? As commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, by virtue of this treaty which would become the supreme law of the land, the president would have the right to send our armies and our navy to Europe, and in its reservation the senate of the United States has endeavored to curb and to control that right.

In reservation 4, the United States reserves the right to itself exclusively to decide what questions are within its domestic jurisdiction. What does that mean? There is a provision in the league of nations which provides, that in case of dispute, if it is found by the council that the question arises out of a matter which is by international law solely with-

(Continued on Page Three)

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