

The Economic Club of New York

39th Meeting

The Military Obligations of Citizenship

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Introduction

Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip

President of the Club and Toastmaster

These are very sober days. I do not see how we can well expect that they will be less sober as they move on their course. It is good that we can gather such a great audience as this of sober-minded men, prepared in anxious to listen to such discussions as this club usually affords.

In the 39 entertainments that this club has given, I think it has never more successfully selected a subject appropriate to the day and the time. The subject as you have seen is “The Military Obligations of Citizenship.” It is true, too, I think, that we have never been able to select a speaker more appropriate to an occasion than the first speaker whom it is my honor to introduce tonight.

Whatever laxness of preparation there may be in this country, whatever failure to see clearly and to prepare, cannot be laid upon the shoulders of Major General Wood. (Great Applause). Of all our citizens, he has been, it seems to me, one of the most clear-visioned in regard to the subject that we have under consideration tonight, and it is a great honor to present him to you. (Great ovation, audience rising).

First Speaker

Major General Leonard Wood, U.S.A.

Commander of the Department of the East

Mr. Toastmaster and ladies and gentlemen, I have been asked to say something on the Plattsburgh idea. I think your chairman has rather illustrated the Plattsburgh idea. He told you the speakers were to begin at 8:30 and he has delivered us at 8:30.

The Plattsburgh idea is national service, not only in time of war but in time of peace. The Plattsburgh idea is an idea of individual obligation for service. It carries with it an appreciation of the fact that democracy, with its equality of opportunity and equality of privilege, demands equality of obligation – that is the Plattsburgh idea. (Great Applause)

There is altogether too much of the feeling in this country that we have our rights and privileges as a right and our obligation as a matter of volition. That won't work in a democracy and no man who is a man can avoid the acceptance of the obligation with the privilege. In other words, we believe in universal service for the nation, (Applause), in time of war as well as in time of peace.

We do not believe in selective conscription either for civil service or for any other kind of service that comes to us as an obligation.

There is a great deal of talk in these days about America for all the world, but there isn't enough talk about bringing these newcomers, who come with these ideas, to an appreciation of what America means. We say, "America for all the world," – yes, if all the world comes here to live up to American ideals. If it comes here to build up traditions of its own blood and establish the prejudices and animosities of its own history, then it is going to be very unfortunate if America is for all the world, because there will soon be no America. It is about time to begin to think of making America what we wish her to be and which she is not and you all know it. I mean a real melting pot and I do not know of anything which will do more to make America a real melting pot than the acceptance by you men, and I see none here too old and none too young to accept and follow up the Plattsburgh idea, which is equality of service and equality of privilege and equality of obligation. (Great Applause)

You cannot very well volunteer to let a better man do your work and still feel you're a man and that has been the basic principle of too many of our people for a long time. These are not days of theory. They are not days of pure intellectuality. They are not days only of discussion. If there ever was a time in the history of the world when we can speak of our days as days of iron and our age as an age of iron, today is the day and our time is the time. These are days of iron and this is an age of iron and it means organization, it means preparation, it means the building up not only of material preparedness, but it means the building up of moral preparedness of that sense of obligation without which this republic cannot endure and pass through any great crisis.

It is clearly up to you people to look the matter in the face. You have been side-stepping your individual obligations towards the nation for a long time. We have done it in all our wars. We found it necessary to buy our soldiers when they didn't volunteer, to buy substitutes, to offer bounties. That thing should never occur again. Manhood suffrage, manhood service. No escape for any man who is of the proper age and physically fit. When you get that, then you will find the man in the street who is laboring as you go by, perhaps in your machine, when he looks at you and realizes that you are of his age and like himself fit, and that if anything happens to this country, which demands both your services, then he will go with you, you go together, that you belong to the same class, to the same group, that you have a common obligation – then you will begin to see something of a spirit of solidarity in this country such as you haven't seen up to the present time. (Great Applause)

You talk about distinctions between the social classes, between the native born and the newcomer, between the Jew and the Gentile – get together in the uniform of your country and train yourselves to be men, efficient and prepared in case of need and in doing that work you will be animated, all of you, regardless of where you came from by one common purpose and you will have one common objective and you will learn for the first time in your lives to look upon the newcomer and see what is good in him and he will learn to look upon the old-timer, the son of the native born, and he will measure him and judge him by his performance of duty.

There is nothing that brings men together more than national service. I saw it in France once

when I had as an aide a great-great-grandson of old Lafayette, a man in the upper social group, saw him pulled from his horse by a little peasant, who embraced him as only one Latin can embrace another, and when the officer was free enough to speak, he said, “This man and I slept alongside together during our early training period, we belong to the same class.” There you had it – the same class, and the class was the class of men devoted to the service of their country and trained to be efficient in it.

Now this is what we are trying to teach at Plattsburgh, a sense of obligation for national service. We know that the Plattsburgh idea is going to go. It is the first sign of the awakening of a sleeping people. It cannot die because it carries the one big message of hope, a message of universal service, not only in time of war but in peace. (Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: It is now my pleasure to introduce Dr. Hibben, the President of Princeton.

(Great Applause)

Second Speaker

President John Grier Hibben

Princeton University

Mr. Toastmaster, ladies and members of the Economic Club, it is a great privilege that I have to stand before you tonight and address this splendid audience of businessmen, and although I come

from an academic centre I feel that I, too, can qualify perhaps as a businessman, for such are the duties of a college president today. The great difference perhaps is that you as heads of corporations have always before you at the end of the year the declaring of dividends – the college president today has to explain away a deficit. (Laughter) That, gentlemen, is the point of difference.

The point of similarity is this: That you are interested in large manufacturing undertakings, receive the raw material and out of that raw material you are to give to the world a finished product. We also have the raw material which comes to us at the beginning of every academic year. We all it, however, “green” material, but it is the same thing. We, however, cannot turn out a finished product. At best we can turn out only a product that has in it a high potential and will show itself in the development of the coming years and we have the same purpose that you have – not to be satisfied with what we have accomplished in the years of the past, but each year looking to the possibility of turning out a more efficient product with higher potential and greater promise. We have not only the task, gentlemen, of endeavoring to furnish men who will have in their lives satisfactory careers for themselves, who will take their place in business or professional life, but we have also the idea that we must train our young men so that they may become in the community in which they live, in the state, in the nation, good citizens of this republic. We have not only to give them the trained mind, but we have to give them also the consciousness of an obligation that they owe to their country, and no university I believe today is fulfilling its task unless this idea of citizenship is one of the most prominent ideas held out before

the young men during their four years.

And at this time particularly, this age in which we live, and by this age I mean these present days, this actual present – the young men of our country are our hope and our defense and we have as those who have charge of their education a very solemn trust, that we may give to the country that type of young men that will prove to be patriots in the very highest sense of the word.

Today, some of us are under severe criticism because it is said by our pacifist friends that we who have established military courses in the universities are leading our young men's thoughts towards possible war. Well, I say, gentlemen, today that war is not only a possibility for our country, but it seems to me a serious probability and we do not well to shirk it even in our thoughts, that we must come face to face with what these times have brought to us.

There is no one in this audience, man or woman, who would choose war rather than peace if that choice were given, but unfortunately we are not called upon at a time like this to choose distinctly between that which is good on the one hand and that which is evil on the other. Every right-minded man would instinctively choose the good and the right and that which is high-minded and noble, as against that which is ignoble and underhand and mean and base.

But we, as American citizens, today are confronted with the most serious ethical problem that

ever presents itself to a human being, namely, a conflict of duties. We are, all of us, pledged as American citizens, pledged as Christians, to pursue peace to the very limit, and yet there is limit to the way of peace and in pursuing it we dare not turn our backs upon our obligations and when we must choose, as I think today we are compelled to choose between the pursuits of peace and all of the comfort and all the convenience and all of the happiness that follow in its wake, on the other hand, to choose the way of sacrifice and suffering, there is no question in my mind as to the direction in which that choice should lie. (Great Applause)

I have recently come across a letter of Abraham Lincoln, that was published for the first time only a few months ago, written to a pacifist friend of his, who wrote to him in 1864 begging him in the name of humanity and in the name of God to bring the terrible Civil War to an end, saying that he had it in his power to bring to a conclusion that great tragedy, and Lincoln writes to his friend, if I may quote a few sentences from this letter: “The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail, that we erring mortals may fail accurately to perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this, but God knows best and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge his wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light he has given us. Surely he intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make and no mortal could stay. Your people have had and are continuing a very great trial on principle and on faith, opposed both to war and to oppression.” That is our great fundamental principle upon which we can rest our case today as a great people, standing before great wrongs and commanding duties, we may have to

choose war.

If I were asked to name the one man out of history who loved peace and sought peace more than any other, I would mention the name of Abraham Lincoln. There is no man during the Civil War who suffered vicariously, so profoundly, as Abraham Lincoln, and I say it, gentlemen, with all reverence, that during those four years we can say of him surely he bore our sorrows and carried our griefs, yet he led us into that war, he led us through it to a peace with victory, thank God.

(Great Applause)

I think, too, gentlemen, that there is no man in the history of this world who could have made a more plausible excuse and justification of his course had he so chosen it than King Albert of Belgium. He might have said that standing in the face of this great invading army, it is my duty as a monarch to my people, to preserve their peace, to preserve their lives and assure them their happiness, and it would be said of him in the historians' accounts of after years that he kept his people out of war, but he chose the way of suffering and such concentration of suffering the world has ever known. He chose the way of suffering and of sacrifice, of humiliation, of degradation and of death, rather than sacrifice the honor and pledged word of his nation. (Great Applause)

But gentlemen, if we are to go into war as seems to be our summons, who is to fight for us? That is not an academic question: it is a very practical question. Are we in our universities, for

instance, to have the same experience that they had at Oxford and Cambridge that when the call came, the flower of youth of Great Britain, volunteered its service. Those young men went out and were cut down, slaughtered, like sheep.

As a mother wrote at the outset of the war: “My only son, 18 years of age, was at Eton, and with his companions enlisted and after a very short service in training, his regiment was sent to the front and almost immediately he went into battle and was killed. I gladly give his life to my country, but I blame my country because England never gave him a fighting chance. He was murdered at the front!” We surely don’t wish that to happen to our young men.”

In any volunteer service that always happens, that when the call comes the best will go to the front and going as they must go without the adequate preparation in our country at this time, we are going through the very depths of sorrow in our families. I believe that if there ever was a stirring call to any nation it has come at this time, that we rouse ourselves and take upon ourselves the idea that has been given to us by General Wood tonight, pledging ourselves to this doctrine of compulsory service, of a common obligation resting upon every able-bodied man throughout our country. (Great Applause)

Gentlemen, do we in our country appreciate the fact that the world is in the grip of a new idea and that idea as it has manifested itself in every nation of Europe is that of the unity, the complete solidarity of the national life, so that in the time of danger all of the forces of a country

are welded into one.

We talk about a melting pot in our country. In order that there may be a melting pot, the material that has to be melted must be put into the pot and there must be a fire kindled underneath it and that is our great need, that with the foreign born elements in our country whom we have welcomed sincerely and heartily, with open arms, will not this compulsory service bring them together, enable them to look at the native born Americans face to face, give them an opportunity of working together, of sleeping together, of eating together, of digging in the same trench, whether it is in peace or in war. We need something, gentlemen, to bring us together and to make of us a unit, and it seems to me that this is a our great opportunity and that we as Americans dare not shirk it.

But someone will say the moment that you will have compulsory military obligation, compulsory service, you are sowing the seeds of a militaristic spirit in our nation. Not so. No one, General Wood or anyone in the American Army or Navy at the present time has ever wished that we should have a large standing army. The only call that has gone forth is that we should have an invisible army, an army which in the time of an emergency may become visible. And that is not a chimera, it is a possibility, and I know it because on the 1st day of August, 1914, I was in Switzerland and so far as I recollect, I don't remember seeing a single soldier on the streets of Geneva. On the 4th day of August, 400,000 of them, called from the mountains and from the valleys, from the cities and from the forges, were around about Switzerland on the frontier as an

army of defense and there they have stood. They have not been brought into the war, however great the temptation may have been, however great the pressure may have been upon that nation. Switzerland has stood merely for the defense of its own rights, a veritable armed neutrality, and if I were asked who are the most peaceful peace-loving people in all of Europe, I would say Switzerland, and what people are best able to defend their own rights or equal to any other, I would say Switzerland. We can, too, here in this country have an invisible army that may be made visible in the time of our peril.

May I again quote from Lincoln, for we naturally go back to Lincoln at this time to the last great peril which confronted us, the Civil War. And in reference to the draft laws, a kind of partial compulsory service, Lincoln said in reference to this, addressing those men who were opposing the draft laws, the same kind of men that are opposing compulsory service today, and we have the same answer to them that Abraham Lincoln had to the men that would stay the progress of the Union in his time. “The toil and blood of at least a million of your manly brethren has been given as much for you as for themselves. Shall it all be lost rather than that you too will bear your part? Shall we shirk from the necessary means to maintain our free government which our grandfathers employed to establish and our own fathers have already employed once to maintain it? Are we degenerate, has the manhood of our race run out?

The spirit of Lincoln is today asking this question of the American people – Are we degenerate, has the manhood of our race run out – and there are such gatherings as this held throughout our

country at this time, which is giving the great answer – No! To the spirit of Abraham Lincoln we pledge ourselves that we will act in this crisis as Lincoln commanded the American people to act in the great crisis of the Civil War.

We have flying now on all of our public buildings and over our homes and over our schoolhouses the American flag. What does that flag signify to us? That it is to protect us and give us assurance of the maintenance of our rights? Yes! But that is only one half of the story. It signifies also that we in turn are to maintain and to protect even with our lives all that that flag symbolizes. It is one of the great symbols of consecration and the other great symbol of consecration is the Cross and they both mean, in different senses, but they both mean the same thing – it is the idea of sacrifice, the willingness to give up something for that which is bigger than ourselves, the willingness to lay down our lives in a sacrificial way for the sake of our country, and that is the idea that underlies this whole program of compulsory service. And when the call comes to us as it may, gentlemen, in a few days, may it be said of us Americans, as Kipling said of France, where he said, “The men are ready to an edge of steel and the women a line of fire behind them.” (Great Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: Your next speaker has had a distinguished career in the pulpit and in the professorial chair. As an author he had made contributions of great value to the educational thought of the country. I have the great pleasure of introducing to you Dr. Berle, of Boston. (Applause)

Third Speaker

Dr. Adolph A. Berle of Boston

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, that our country is in need of some form of military reorganization, is one of the commonplaces of military discussion in this country. Whenever a man stands up and with a great show of eloquence and a great show of erudition says, “We must reorganize the military situation in this country” he only says what every Secretary of War has said for the last 30 years. There is nothing original about that. When the man urges that we must have the obligation of citizenship and that every man in the country is honor bound to render to his country a suitable military obligation, that is both stated in the terms of rather governmental organization, and has, I think in my judgment never been questioned by any serious man in the whole country.

Now, it is entirely beside the discussion of such a problem as we have here tonight to simply stand up here and say to us that we must support our flag. We will all support our flag. (Great Applause) It is entirely beside the point here to say to us that we must all render a suitable and just service to our country. We will all do that. We have been trying to do it – some of us for half a century – and it is rather late in the day to begin telling us that we must support our country, that we must serve it, that we must stand by our flag, and that we must sacrifice for it. I should have to think very meanly of my country if I thought that my countrymen, from the Atlantic to

the Pacific, had to be instructed in that kind of primer patriotism. (Applause)

Now the topic tonight is “The Military Obligations of Citizenship,” and this is an economic club, and I propose to stay by the title and by the terms of the organization of this club. Now, we need military reorganization. Every Secretary of War has said it time and time and time again. Every Secretary of War has said that it ought to be adequate, and beyond a few extremists I know no man, no reasonable man, from one end of this land to the other, who doesn’t want his country adequately prepared. I know no man who is a reasonable man who doesn’t want a military organization which will be adequate to every reasonable and just necessity of this country. Surely we don’t need much introduction on that matter.

But here are two questions that we do need to discuss and which the president didn’t say a word about. We are about to change, if the program that he outlines in part goes through, we are about to change the entire military history of the country. Now the question is are you going to do it with your brains or are you going to do it with your emotions. (Great Applause) That is the real question. We need reorganization. Two questions confront you. First, who shall do it? And the second, how shall it be done?

Now, that is your problem and all the flag waving and all the pathetic pleas to be loyal seems to me to discredit American manhood and I don’t propose in this audience in this capital city of this country to appeal to you to stand by your country. If you don’t stand by your country, you ought to lose your country. That’s all there is to be said about that. (Great Applause)

Now, President Hibben called your attention to the fact that we were to have an invisible army. I don't know whether President Hibben has read the proposed Army Bill, but if he had, he would have seen that it proposes a very visible army, of so large a number that it is bigger than the visible army that the British had, than Germany had before the war began, and it proposes an initial expenditure of a billion and a half dollars, according to the General Staff's own report in Washington, and it proposes to utterly transfer in an instant what it took Germany a hundred years to do. Now, maybe you think that American genius can do in 15 minutes what it took Germany a hundred years to do, but I don't think it can.

I believe with this entire problem and I believe in that reorganization. I love my country and want it suitably and adequately prepared, and I believe no people have muddled up this question and muddled the American mind more than the people who have gone at it the way they have.

If that were merely my own opinion, I would have hesitated to express it, but only yesterday in the New York Times, a man under whom I was reared in Harvard College, one of the maturest minds North America ever produced, said this: "It is extremely unfortunate and it is much to be deplored that the General Staff of the United States Army has put before the country a proposal that all the able-bodied young men be required to spend eleven months in the army, of which the present regular army is to be the type. That such proposal should have proceeded from the General Staff is a demonstration that the government and the people of the United States cannot

trust to the chiefs of the existing regular army the preparation of the general scheme for reorganizing and bringing into being the new kind of army which the country needs, because what they obviously have in mind is an old-fashioned kind of army, which it is not for the interest of the people of the United States to create for permanent uses. “Fortunately,” says President Eliot, “fortunately it is unimaginable that either Congress or the Administration will adopt such an impracticable suggestion”

What does that mean? President Eliot has in mind this: Just look at England at this very moment, the army that did its work or the volunteer army of Kitchner, and the testimony that is dribbling in from England shows that the conscription of the army was distinctly lower in type. That is not to be compared to the volunteer army of Kitchner, and England came to conscription after a most terrible state and in the midst of it all, Australia voted down conscription and Canada, bending every nerve, has still refused to go into the business of conscription. Now here we are proposing in this country, with all the world at war, bleeding to death, in the last throes all of them, helpless and hopeless and weak, we propose to tear away and in my humble judgment adopt the obsolete standard and begin preparing the country after the manner of Prussia in 1806.

I don't believe that is the way to go about it, to get what we want in this country, and let me say to all of you, I have no natural prejudices against the military calling. I would like to know how many of you men who are sitting here tonight have ever served in any capacity in the Army or Navy. Hold up your hands. Just look around, General Wood. I would like to say to you that I am

the son of a Civil War veteran, my wife the daughter of a Civil War veteran, the granddaughter of two officers who were with Washington at Yorktown, and I myself served two years in the 1st Battalion of Cavalry in Massachusetts, and I have a son who will take his place in the reserve corps next June. I have no prejudice against the Army, but I would like to have the brains of my country employed when we do reorganize the country. (Great Applause)

Now the truth about this whole matter is this: We are doing this thing just as we do everything else in America. Do absolutely nothing forever and then get hysterical and then do the wrong thing. (Laughter)

I do not share the extreme opinions of President Eliot concerning the General Staff, but I think President Eliot's distinction between the volunteer army and the conscription army is a real distinction. He, of course, believes in the Swiss system and there is much in the Swiss system to commend it. But I think I agree more with the man who is at the head of the military forces of Massachusetts, the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, in proposing an entirely different program.

President Hibben referred to what happened at Oxford. When the call came to go to the border not long ago, what did we do in this country? We did exactly what they did at Oxford and Cambridge. We went around at our colleges and we encouraged our boys helter-skelter to go in. I will tell you I traveled from one coast to the other during that period and if you could have heard

what was said about the discussion like this, except by the consent of the military authorities.

You could not bring the mind of country to bear upon the military problem and you had the same pitiful situation that we have had so often over and over and over again, where we have had our military tragedies and then tried to explain them away. You only recently read the report of Parliament on the Dardanelles expedition. I have often thought that we could make it so wisely and reasonably that we shall gain the consent of the masses of our people without driving them into it and without any invidious implications and without coercing their brains.

Now a good deal has been said here tonight about the melting pot. May I say a word on that subject? The basis of this melting pot is here tonight, because it ran away from compulsory military service. It saw the viciousness of it, it saw the workings of it, and it saw the handicap of it for its young men and it came to be free from it. Now, just what kind of an impression will it make and what kind of a beautiful patriotic response do you suppose you are likely to get from these men and children to all of a sudden jump into it? Is that the way to get their good will?

Now, my judgment is that in this whole problem you have gone at it entirely from the wrong way and I would like to say in this connection I have no fear personally. I have two boys of my own and I would disown them if they didn't rush to the defense of their country in any need, but I would like to say to President Hibben that I don't give a snap for compulsory sacrifice. Any man who has to be driven into sacrifice – the psychology of that is a little bit mixed anyhow.

(Laughter)

Now, gentlemen, we don't sacrifice by compulsion. We sacrifice because we are possessed of a great ideal and because we are held in the leash of that great ideal and what I should like to see is the entire youth of this land put under some fixed form of physical discipline and training. I would like to see the youth of my land learn that kind of discipline which will not be spent here and there and yonder by the brutalism of Prussian sabinism. And I would like to see the physically fit nation, fit for every task, industrially, socially, educationally and with all of us loving his country, not because it is compelled to, but because of the fine love of a nation which has given them large opportunity, freely having received as freely to give. Those are the armies that make the living vital history of the world. Such an army it was that saved us in the Civil War, such an army it was –

Major General Leonard Wood: Not a bit of it, it isn't true.

Dr. Adolph A. Berle: Such an army it was, and if it did take that long to train it, and if it did take the long four years to give it discipline, such an army it was that gave us our country. The army that marched under Washington weren't only Englishmen from New England and Virginia, there were Dutchmen from New York, there were Swedes from Delaware and men from Pennsylvania and that is the reason you have the United States of America.

Now let me not be misunderstood in this matter. All I am pleading for is that we do not act under compulsion and we do not act hysterically. If we have a war next week, this problem won't

affect it. All I want is that when we go into that reorganization, we go into it wisely.

I will tell you another thing that has to be considered in this matter. I am sorry it has to be considered, but it must be considered. Is there a man in this room tonight that hasn't learned that the armies of the future will fight not only on the front where they are firing guns, but in the factories where they are making munitions and where they are making the implements of war? I believe on any consideration of this problem, and I say to you again, I am sorry it has to be considered, but I believe it has to be considered and I believe it is foolish to try and avoid considering it in consideration of this problem that leaves out of consideration what the vast millions of workingmen feel towards it and how their attitude can be educated toward it, ignores one of the vital elements of the whole problem. And I want a mobilization of the brains and I want mobilization of the skill and I want mobilization of all the power and I want that directed by intelligence and reflection and I don't want my country rushed into plans pell-mell which will not bear on sober consideration and which will not ultimately be what our country actually wants.

May I close by saying this one word? I yield to absolutely nobody in my admiration for those men who take upon them the service and the sacrifice for their country. I spend my summer months up in the hills of New Hampshire where I own a house where General John Dix was born and I had put out in front a boulder and a bronze tablet sunk into it, giving the date of John A. Dix's birth and I had placed underneath, "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag,

shoot him on the spot.” When I am in the residence there flies a big flag over that spot as a reminder to the thousands that go by. But on the other side of that land there is another boulder, because from that same house, built by Lieutenant-Colonel Timothy Dix, from that same house, Mr. Daniel Webster first hung out his shingle to practice as a lawyer and there I have caused to be inscribed also his name and those words of his immortal speech – “Liberty and Union, one and inseparable, now and forever.”

I want that form of liberty and union in all the institutions of our country, even the army which will accentuate its essential loyalty to these tenets and which will forever hold forth to the nations of the world that when we build a powerful army we build never for aggression, but always for defense. And I want in every military reorganization that we have and I am willing to go to the last limit and that is the result of maturity and reflection and wise discussion, when a man like President Eliot and others take the attitude they do, I say that when the discussion arises that we bring into subjection all the elements and in the multitude of counselors find a wiser adjustment of the military obligations of our citizenship. (Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: One of the characteristic features of this club is that it always runs on schedule with its speakers. I find tonight we are a little ahead of the schedule and I may therefore be permitted to vary the order somewhat. I feel we have one speaker who still has something that he might say to us to our great advantage. I want to call on Major General Wood to complete his speech. (Tremendous Ovation, Audience Rising and Cheering)

Fourth Speaker

Major General Leonard Wood

Commander of the Department of the East

Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard a speech whose principles if adopted, and I address myself especially to you women, as you were involved as the mothers, principles which insure the useless sacrifice of your sons. (Great Applause) It is a wicked and a murderous doctrine. It is full of misstatement and untrue. (Great Applause)

To take a few facts. In the first place, President Eliot is strongly for universal service, (Great Applause), without any qualifications or exceptions. You will find his full views in the WORLD'S WORK for January, I think.

In the second place, Australia did not vote to reject conscription. She adopted it by an overwhelming vote. (Applause) She objected to conscription for foreign service; she was overwhelmingly for it for home service.

The statement concerning England carries with it its own refutation. The drafted men are the poorer men than volunteers. Agreed, because the best men went untrained and unready and were a useless sacrifice. Then came the draft, with the unwilling, with the shirk, left to fill the armies.

Now you talk, sir, (To Dr. Berle), about the army of the Civil War. You apparently have not read the history of the Civil War with any care. (Great Laughter) But those are serious things to say to an audience of this sort. The South, full with intensity of its purpose, went to the draft exactly one year after the war began – the 19th day of April, 1862; volunteering had ceased. The North had its first draft order in August, 1862; volunteering had ceased.

A very elementary bit of information on the war may be useful. We were wholly unprepared. We met a people wholly unprepared. After the Battle of Bull Run, it was eight and a half months before another action could be fought. Who counsels this country to go into war against a modern organization under the volunteer system which insures those results, which insures the murder of its people?

A Voice: No one.

Major General Leonard Wood: No one that is sane and loyal. (Great Applause) Now about the Revolution, what are the facts of the Revolution? General Washington's word at Cambridge and General Washington's word all through the Revolution. What are some of the other facts – 89,000 men in 1776, less men every year, volunteering stopped as Washington predicted at Cambridge. We were buying men within three years on the streets with bounties of \$700 in money, \$500 in land, freedom to Blacks if they would enlist, every kind of inducement, and in

the critical year of the war – 1781. How many of your volunteers were there? Only 29,400 and some odd men enrolled for the entire year. What saved the country? You know what saved the country – the French fleet and the French division at a critical moment. (Great Applause)

What were the words of Light Horse Harry Lee, who went through the war, who spoke not from the shallow inexperience of emotion, but from hard years of fighting? What did he say? He said, “That nation is the murderer of its people which sends them untrained, undisciplined to meet disciplined and trained men prepared for battle.” That is what the men of the Revolution said.

Now the statement has been made that every Secretary of War has advocated preparedness. It is true, and the reason we are urging it today is that that voice has never been listened to. That is why we are urging it today.

Now what are the lessons of the Civil War? Troops brought from the South to regain possession of this city, because volunteering had ceased and because the men had to be gathered under arms and held and sent to the front. What is the record of that war? 2,763,000 men enrolled in the Northern Army. No sense of obligation on the part of many, no discredit to the fine fellows who volunteered, the good men always volunteer, but there are not enough of them. Some good men volunteer to pay their taxes, some good ones don't. We find there that the spirit of the volunteer has to be coupled with a lot of compulsion. 504,000 men deserted, sir, during the Civil War. They were your men who were caught under the bribe of money, a part of the paid substitute,

volunteering had ceased. No sane man can doubt what would have happened to this country had we had to meet trained forces – nothing but disaster.

Now for the Army of the General Staff. Let us take a little in the way of historical precedent.

Thomas Jefferson, a rather erratic person in his early days, a saner man when he had a little experience in war – he had a good deal in talking. (Laughter) He advocated 300,000 men, armed and organized and ready, with a population of a little over 3,000,000. Again, he advocated universal compulsory, military service. George Washington, sir, advocated the same in the strongest possible terms.

Our own Constitution carries with it compulsory military service from 18 to 45. It is the fundamental law. The only thing is that we have never had the good sense to see that our people received the training.

Now, you women know as well as you know there is a God in heaven that if war comes, your men, your sons, are going, and you would be ashamed of them if they didn't go. And we should be ashamed of you and you of yourselves if you didn't take that wise measure of precaution to see to it that when they went, they went trained, armed and ready, not to be useless sacrifices, to be willing ones we hope, always hope, but to be efficient and effective men. Of course, we all want voluntary service. We want voluntary morality. We want everything voluntary that's good, but no one but a fool expects to get it. (Great Laughter)

I speak this strongly because you have heard a doctrine which means the murder of your men, the dishonor of your women, the ruin of your country. In these days of organization, when everybody is prepared – who with either humanity, patriotism, good sense, can advocate an untrained army – never mind how willing a people – to meet an equally patriotic, a much better trained, and a much better equipped people. We don't want that, because we love our country. Not that we love liberty less or voluntary service less, but because we love our country more and we love the lives of our people more and we don't care to see them uselessly sacrificed. We know something of what war means.

Now, we hear always the convenient word of Prussianism. That, I suppose, from the frequency of its use, carries with it the understanding that that is the only military system where universal service is applied. Again a bit of elementary information. France brings to the colors a much larger proportion of men than Germany and she brings them under a rigid law of compulsion and like Germany and like Switzerland, the law has been voted by the people themselves. They have learned, sir, that voluntary service is not dependable, any more than voluntary morality or voluntary honesty or voluntary regard for the laws of sanitation or public safety, that carry with them a penalty. (Great Laughter and Applause)

We, too, have boys, quite as patriotic as yours. We may not be as strong as you physically, but we are quite as willing to die as you are and we hope that we are going to make a more

intelligent preparation for it. (Great Laughter and Applause) I don't propose, as long as I have a voice, to send the youth of this country untrained against a highly specialized and highly trained troop of today. To do it is to murder them and no one but a wanton will advocate it. You cannot deal with this matter too seriously, gentlemen. That is the life of your country and the life of your people.

Now about the army of the General Staff. That matter is going to be discussed by the Congress of the nation. They represent the people of the United States. Now as to the intelligence which is waking up this new system, a dozen of the leading and best men, the very ablest men in the country, they may not have brains. I think they have. (Laughter) The General Staff of the Army are the selected officers of the army. Their scheme is a regular army of about 250,000 men. The registered chauffeurs and truck drivers in New York State exceed that number. Not a very dangerously large army. But that isn't the point. That is the army considered large enough to garrison the Philippines, Hawaii, Panama, Alaska, and other possessions and leave a force in the United States for our coast defense and a training force for our youths.

Now as to the beguiling of youth in the mustering, it has been my duty to muster in 56% of the men who belong to the militia in this part of the United States. (Great Applause) Not one single complaint of that kind has come to my headquarters – among the tens upon tens of thousands of letters – that there has been anything of that sort, except perhaps here and there an exceptional case.

Now again, sir, as to the volunteer spirit in this department, our call for militia was 132,000 men. The response was 87,000 men in six months of effort, 35% less than the call. Supposing it had been a real emergency, it was supposed to be for the first month.

Now I have spoken with great frankness. I think you are entitled to it. You're the people, you're entitled to know the truth and I have tried to tell you some of the plain facts, not because I want war. There is no one here who hates it more, no one who wants it less. But it isn't what we want which comes to us in this world. War is here, it is everywhere. God save us from it, but God save us from ourselves if we don't use the faculties which he has given us, our eyes to see, our ears to hear and our memory and our intelligence to gather and employ some of the lessons which have come to others. (Great Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: I have the honor next to present to you the distinguished head of Williams College, President Garfield. (Great Applause)

Fifth Speaker

President Harry A. Garfield

Williams College

Mr. Toastmaster, ladies and gentlemen, I think you will agree with me that the speaker who

comes on at this moment or any time after the discussion that has now taken place is in a difficult position. (Laughter) It doesn't matter what he says, it doesn't matter which side he takes, it's all been said and been said with so much force and effect that nothing is to be added that can be of any particular consequence.

But I realize that the Economic Club of New York City invites a number of gentlemen to speak on an occasion of this kind not because it is to hear anything particularly new from each one, but because under the genius of our institutions of which this is a type, you desire to hear from different men the different ways in which they look at the same question, even though one speaker may duplicate what another has said. But my labors will be some lightened by reason of all that has been said and I shall hope not to detain you even for the prescribed time.

My understanding is that the question we are speaking about tonight is the particular question already set before you of compulsory military service as the particular phase of the military obligation of citizenship which rests upon us all. Now, I will venture to make just one point and that is this, not that there are not other points, but as I have indicated they have already been made. I agree entirely with General Wood that it is folly to send young men out to military service as it is folly to send them out to any kind of service without proper training. (Applause) If it were purely an educational matter, I should feel confidence in my own way of going at the question, at least some degree of confidence. But when it involves this particular question, as it does, matters of military concern, I feel a good deal as I suppose General Wood would feel if I

turned him loose on the problems of the curriculum at Williams College – he might be over his depth in some respects, although the General is of that husky sort that I imagine he never quite gets his head under water. (Laughter)

Now I say training without any manner of doubt is the thing that we ought to look at. So much do I believe it that when only the other day it appeared fairly, not certain, but fairly likely that this country would be swept into a situation at any rate like war, if not actual war, that I went before the faculty of Williams College and asked them to adopt a resolution requesting me at once to write to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of Navy asking what steps were necessary to be taken in order that at Williams College we might establish a Reserve Officers Unit. (Great Applause)

It wasn't because Williams College is given to preparations for war. Remote among the Berkshire Hills, our intention is of another sort. We are an institution of liberal training. We do not seek even to prepare men for the vocations in life, but to lay that broad foundation which should underlie all vocations if one can spend the time to put it under. And yet to a man we felt that if military services were required of the young men of this country, we would not be dealing fairly with these young men if we did not give them the opportunity to train themselves in such fashion that they could take care of themselves and that they could serve our country in the best way possible. (Applause)

Now the question that puzzles me, I admit, is this: Granting, as you see I do, the importance of training, what is meant precisely, if there is a distinction, between the military training such as the young men get at Plattsburgh and in connection with the study of military science, and that military service which is referred to in the question tonight and which forms the central feature of the bill prepared by the General Staff of the Army. It seems to me, a layman, that there is a distinction there, which we as citizens must discuss if for no other reason than to have that distinction explained, either to make it clear that the distinction isn't there, or else if there is a difference between the two things, then let us understand what that distinction is.

Now my understanding of the situation is this: If the young men go to Plattsburgh, they go there while at the same time they are going about their vocations, whatever it is, whether a student in a college, whether a man holding down a job in one of your offices or anywhere else in the country. The vocation goes on just the same and the training is taken, so to speak, on the side. The training, however, is put in at the time and for a block of time that gives it the quality that comes from intensive training and it is therefore valuable in proportion as it is intensive.

On the other hand, a call to service, if I understand the proposals of the General Staff, involves taking young men out of their ordinary vocations, whether workers or students, at the very outset of their career and for the time being moving them over in the army, so that service to the nation becomes for the time being their vocation. They are taken out of economic life and put into military life. Now, it seems to me fairly obvious that if that is to be the order of the day, if they

are to secure their training, whether of a kind they must secure in that fashion, then it must be demonstrated to the people of the United States that that is necessary, and that the other which I have denominated training is not sufficient.

I had supposed that it was sufficient, and that the young men who went to Plattsburgh last summer and the summers before that time were really preparing themselves to do efficient service as well as to protect themselves in the service they should render. Now possibly that isn't so, but if it isn't so, then on an occasion like this and the other occasions when throughout our country we are to discuss this bill offered by the General Staff, that should be brought out and made clear.

I say the burden of proof rests on the advocates of universal compulsory military service of the kind that removes men from their vocations; the burden rests upon those advocates to show that this is necessary. Otherwise, I think the people of this country will be very slow to urge their representatives in Congress to adopt a bill of that sort.

You see I have raised rather a question, and I do not venture to make an answer to it, because I confessed at the outset inability to deal adequately at all with things military. If it is possible under the circumstances to secure adequate training through those camps and those means which do not remove our citizens from their regular vocations, but permit them to carry on the training at the same time with their vocations or without permanently abandoning it, then it seems to me,

gentlemen, that that is the kind of thing we should advocate and not the other. If, on the other hand, it can be demonstrated to our satisfaction that that is not sufficient, then I bow to the superior judgment and realize that we must be in for another kind of thing.

I want to leave the question in just that form, except to say this one final word concerning that feature. General Wood knows not only what we are undertaking to do at Williams College now – in our haste we called him on the phone and sought his good offices and his good offices haven't ceased. He is still at work trying to get us an officer who will come to Williamstown and train us. But he also knows that I have been interested in his endeavors at Plattsburgh and believe very much in the kind of training that young men are put to there in those camps, as I have had occasion to say on other occasions like this, if every student in Williams College could, during two of his three summer vacations, spend the time at Plattsburgh, it would be time well spent.

But now in closing, let me give expression to one more thought, something that I venture to say is in the mind of every man in this room. We believe in our own nation, yes, just as we believe in our circle, our own community, our college, whatever it is, that makes part of the nation of which we are proud to call ourselves citizens. I hope we realize that obligation rests upon us as a duty that must be performed. I hope also that there will always be a lot to say to you men when we undertake to neglect those opportunities, those obligations which we ought to perform, thou shall not neglect, but we must perform. (Applause)

At the same time, as American citizens, can we lose sight of the progress of history? Can we fail to realize that just as out of the tribal condition there came the feudal condition and that out of the feudal condition there rose the nation, the sense of nationality emerging from those varying and conflicting forces which seemed at one time never to be able to coalesce? So out of the nations that make up western civilization, that now make up the world, there will in the course of time emerge that which we call the spirit and sense of Internationality. We dare not lose sight of that unless we would throw all historic experience and learning to the winds. And whatever we do must be done with a view to that long future which will bring us ever in closer contact with the peoples of other nations, to understand their ways, to sympathize with their aspirations, to take from them those things which are good and enable them to overcome those things which are evil. That is the spirit of Internationality, without which our nationality, our patriotism were indeed a stale and unprofitable thing. (Great Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: When some ten years ago, England permitted us to draw from her midst one of her most distinguished preachers, she did us a great service. That man has charmed countless audiences, instructed them, trained their moral fibers, and it is now my pleasure to introduce him,

Dr. Aked. (Applause)

Sixth Speaker

Dr. Charles F. Aked

Former Minister, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church

Mr. President, General Wood, ladies and gentlemen, I am more than grateful to President Garfield for the calmer atmosphere in which I am permitted to rise. (Laughter) It is an old story of a trembling aspirant to fame, presented at an Imperial Court and stammering out his thanks for the pleasure of the interview with royalty, when the Emperor interrupted him, “Honor, sir, honor, an interview with me is an honor, not a pleasure,” and the poor man said, “Yes, sire, I appreciate that.”

I appreciate very highly the honor to speak to the Economic Club of New York. You will hardly expect me to profess that I find any particular pleasure in speaking at this hour on this subject. (Laughter) I am too profoundly conscious that the views I have to lay before you, to many of you will be unpalatable in the extreme. (Laughter) Believe me, however, you are avenged in advance, (Laughter), for however uncomfortable it may be for you to sit and listen to me, it is 10 times more uncomfortable for me to speak. (Laughter)

I remind myself that I have been invited here specifically to say these things and the only return that I can make for your hospitality and kindness is to speak with perfect frankness the deep convictions of my life. So long as I speak to you with becoming seriousness and with all courtesy of expression, with all sweetness of spirit, I am sure that you would rather that I speak to you freely and without fear.

For the view of compulsory military service, which I am by your courtesy permitted to put before you is, notwithstanding all that has been said of its purpose, is that it is un-American, that it lowers the American ideal, that it betrays America's past, that it is false to the American spirit. It is a step backward and downward, back to the past from which we have emerged, down to the lower levels of European despotism. It is a surrender of some of the great and precious things which have made the very name America dear and sacred to millions of earth's children in whose souls as yet burn the flame of liberty.

For compulsory military service is compulsory military service, it is compulsory service. It is not service cheerfully rendered to the country of one's birth or adoption, the country of one's love and prayers; it is not a glad gift of a year or two of youth to the country and the flag. It is coercion and the militarism of the Kaiser and the autocracy of the Czar can do as well. Many of you were born on American soil. You cannot be expected to be as good Americans as those of us who come from other lands. (Laughter) You were born so and you can't help it. We are Americans by choice. America beneath the stars and stripes called to the America within our souls and we came, for he is an American wheresoever born who has an American heart, who shares the American passion for liberty, who cherishes America's institutions, who is faithful to American ideals, who will love and if need be die in the determination that government of the people, for the people, by the people shall not perish off this earth. (Applause) And these Americans by the millions, literally by the millions have been lured and won and charmed and inspired by the vision of an America free from conscription and the death dealing systems of

European tyranny. The thought of America condescending to the ancient ferocities and insanities of Europe is bitter with the sense of betrayal. We look for liberty and behold, the despotism of European military systems, and let there be no mistake about this – despotism those systems undoubtedly represent.

It must be 15 years or more since Lionel Dackel, a brilliant young Frenchman wrote his book, the account of his own service in the French cavalry. He wrote it in England, he published it in England. He cut himself off from his country, his home and his friends, that he might do it. The naked animalism of the life he had been compelled to lead, the foul and disgusting occupations found for him, the degrading punishments inflicted, the soulless tyrannies, petty and coarse, of non-commissioned officers, corporals, and sergeants hating him for his education and refinement, the daily discipline intended to break his spirit, made an Englishman of that Frenchman and a sworn foe to the compulsory military system.

A few years passed and John Oxenham wrote his novel, “The Iron Flail,” fiction true to fact, and again it was the French military system which was accounted, the same, senseless soulless tyranny, the same system nerve-destroying, hate breeding, appalling tragedy. The older brother strikes his officer and is shot for the offense; the younger brother watches his chance and shoots the officer. This is the military system of Republican France. It was the military system of Republican France that produced the unclean piece that made Alfred Dreyfus their prey and democratic Republican America may learn the lesson.

The worse defect of slavery is not chains and the whip, the curse of slavery is that it breeds slaves; it gives us instead of a man, a slave, with the soul of a slave. Now it may be said that this is an argument against military service and not merely against compulsory military service. If that is so, I make you a present of it. But that is not my argument, for under a voluntary system where the citizens of a free country have to be persuaded and induced to enter the army, there are natural limitations placed upon the bullying propensities of human nature; abuses of power there may be, but not such abuses of power. You may spread-eagle if you will, but you know very well that if you spread-eagle too frequently and too far, you will end by defeating your own purpose, you will not build up the machine that you are trying to build up. If in a free country, you make army life hateful, you will end by having no army life at all. Not so when once you have established compulsion. The bullying propensities of human nature may take their course, the restraints, the natural limitations are removed, the man is helpless, the machine is master, and there is a deeper sense in which a conscript army becomes the instrument of tyranny.

After Waterloo, when the British House of Commons was voting emoluments and rewards and honors to the officers who had fought at Waterloo, one daring soul proposed that the men of the rank and file should receive their recognition and their honor too. He proposed that in memory of the gallantry displayed by the private soldiers at Waterloo, henceforth no flogging of more than 100 lashes should ever be imposed upon a British soldier. Lord Burleston, the supreme bully of his generation opposed the motion on the grounds that the English people, being more high

spirited and independent than any other people on earth, needed more flogging than any other to keep them in order. The argument was so convincing that the motion was negated without a division.

You know very well, though you may deplore it, that there are in this country men with no sense of the greatness and the sacredness of a democracy, who are roughly of opinion that most of the American people need a good deal of flogging to keep them in order. The European advocate of the system will tell you that the drilled man is more amenable afterwards in civil life, more ready to take orders. Disciplined to confidence, habits have been formed when he is very young, deep impressions made upon his mind when that mind is weakest, the drilled and disciplined soul will remain, he has been thought to regard certain individuals and certain classes of individuals as superior persons and he is not to argue when they speak.

Now there is something gone from him, the sense of owning one's self, of being responsible for one's self, initiative, resource, daring, something of the fine flavor of manhood that goes with the stark naked individualism in which we have glorified, something has gone, the manhood has been curbed. He is something less of a free man and being something less free, he is something less of a man. He may be more easily manipulated by evil interests, more easily exploited by predatory wealth. He may be more readily made the instrument of tyranny – is this what you want? Is this what you want of American manhood? The selfish man, if he were to look into his own heart for an answer, the selfish man would have to say, “Yes, that is what we do want, in

our interest and in the interest of the class to which we belong.” The selfish men who would, for their own aggrandizement, exploit the United States Army and dethrone liberty upon the hypercritical pretense of patriotism, are enemies of the Commonwealth and are traitors to the flag.

Gentlemen, another objection to the whole system of compulsory military service, another objection which by your courtesy I shall put before you is that it tends to give power to a military caste, always powerful and sometimes possessed of a power that is dangerous to the well-being of the Commonwealth. I am told that for every million of soldiers we need 30,000 officers. I take no responsibility for the figures. The point is that these men must make the army their life work and the trouble is that the better they are, the worse they become. That is to say, in proportion as they are fine and loyal gentlemen, of capacity and of skill, of men you know and admire, in that proportion they become dangerous to the peace of their country and to the peace of the world.

They must give their lives to their work, they are devoted, they are loyal, they are industrious. The army is theirs, a sacred trust from the land they love. They must foster it, watch over it, safeguard it, perfect the machine. Is it not inevitable then when the hour of international debate arises and disputes between nations arise, such a man, who has given 20, 30 years of his life to the work that he believes great and patriotic and sacred, is it not likely that when the critical hour comes, his mind all unconsciously and with perfect naturalness will incline to the instrument of force with which all the issues of his life are bound? What is supreme with him is not the judicial

settlement of international disputes, not the establishment of international tribunals or international courts of conciliation, not the enthroning of law over material strength. What is supreme with him is the army and all that the army represents and in the hour of crisis, his influence is upon the side of war.

It is futile to say that the soldier is the servant of the state and has no power in directing its policy. That in letter is untrue, in spirit it is essentially false. The military man of commanding name and character has influence and great influence in the councils of every state in the civilized world, including our own. His commanding name and rank and his character are assets in any popular appeal. Politicians and statesmen listen to him in the day of peace and Europe is at war in this hour, because in the last fateful days of July 1914, the control of the forces of nations passed out of the hands of statesmen into the hands of soldiers. (Applause)

As Europe was and is organized, it was inevitable, but America may learn the lesson. Think of a man who has trained all his life long for the work of the surgeon. He has studied through college, university, medical college, hospital, year by year afterwards with conscientious toil adding to his knowledge, becoming as he thinks more perfect, more sure of himself and forever denied the opportunity of practicing the surgeon's art. The years pass over his head, the grey shows at his temples, he is conscious that something of force is passing from him. The years not only bring a diminution of his powers, powers naturally great, now highly trained and specialized, but the years pass on and he is a surgeon, forbidden to operate on a suffering patient, if you like, a

physician forbidden to heal or a preacher forbidden to preach. Should you like it in your business? Should you like to be such a man? Would you not want to practice the profession you had learned, in which you believed, and you are forbidden to practice your work?

Now, gentlemen, you do me a base injustice if you dream for a moment that I suggest to you that the military man plans or plots war, but when the hour of crisis comes, the whole training of his life, all that he has fitted himself for inclines to the side of war and his influence in a community makes for war. And if you say but once again this is an argument against army service and not against compulsory service, I repeat very well, then you are welcome to the argument, but you must see that it is a practical thing.

A system of universal compulsory service gives to this military caste enormously increased powers, enormously increased compactness and solidarity, prestige and power. Germany, France, and Russia have all shown us that a military caste can curse the nation. (Applause) Serious Americans will lay it to heart, and what more I am allowed to say, I would if I could say in the solemnest words of human speech. For me, gentlemen, all this business of vast preparation for war is for America looking in the wrong direction. It is looking in the wrong direction – (Cries of “No,” “No,” and “Yes.”) (Continuing)...It looks in the direction of the machinery of war and the business of America is with the creation of the machinery of peace. (Great Applause)

The world possesses more than enough of the machinery of war. It does not possess the machinery of peace. And yet to create the machinery of peace and so safeguard civilization upon the earth and hand down to after generations a large estate of faith and freedom, such as the bloodstained ages in the past have never known, should be for America an enabling and inspiring ambition, worthy of the golden glory of the nation. This looks toward the past. Ours is a forward looking mind, else are we untrue Americans. The man of the old world has fought and ravaged and slain, darkens all the crime that tear each other in their slime. We are mellow music matched with him. America must find a way to nobler things. The world must find a better way of living, a better way of settling international disputes than this which has already been given us, a continent crimson with battles and hollow with griefs. America must find the nobler way and lead the nations there.

If only I could vision to you the role of America, as I see it, in the divine drama of history and civilization and see this continent kept empty except for the engine who never scratched the surface of the earth. I see this continent kept empty up to a certain moment in history, up to a time when the human race has reached a certain state in evolution. Then the restless, the aspiring, the daring, the men who love liberty, brought here from the old races of the world, then I see them spread from the wilds and wilderness of Massachusetts over the Alleghenies, over the Mississippi, over the endless plain, over the Rocky Mountains, over the Alkali Desert, over the snow-capped Sierras, down to the Pacific Coast, over this vast continent, one people, one language, one law, one flag, a hundred million of free men and women, everywhere the home of

liberty.

Ancient rivers run dry that in their beds we may keep up the nuggets of gold, the bog and the swamp and the morass give their oil, gush forth their liquid wealth, the desert, the wilderness flourishing and blossom as the rose. Over the prairie is heard the song of harvest home – to what end, to what end all this, the manifest destiny of the American people.

The God-appointed task of the United States, for which we have been divinely called into existence, divinely equipped, divinely guided, to build up life on truer and juster foundations than the old world ever laid, to evolve a nobler manhood and womanhood than the old world ever knew, to produce a type of humanity with more of divinity at its heart and this cannot be done in war, in modern war, with murder and massacre by machinery.

It can only be done after the arts and amenities of peace and to lead the nations of the world along the path of peace is America's predestined aim. And it is in this spirit, it is in this spirit that I salute the flag, in this spirit of peace and with the hope of divine leadership of the nation in the case of universal brotherhood, the stars that break up the night and make it beautiful, and the red beams of morning that tell that a new day is dawning over the world, are the emblems you fling wide to the breeze. Beneath its shining folds, your fathers died and I pray that as long as summer suns rise and set, this flag, your flag – and I thank God that I can say – our flag, may float over a nation, great, united and free, and leading the flags of all the nations in the triumphant march of

peace. (Great Applause)

Mr. Vanderlip: It is a distinguished thing to be a citizen of a city so great as New York. It is a distinguished honor to be a citizen of a city so well governed as New York. (Applause) The last speaker of this very interesting evening is a man who has rendered many years of service to this city. The last three years he has rendered in a most distinguished manner as the Mayor of the city. It is indeed my honor to introduce Mayor Mitchel. (Great Applause)

Seventh Speaker

The Honorable John Purroy Mitchel

Mayor of the City of New York

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen of the Economic Club, I am conscious of the obligation which is laid upon me in closing this discussion. I wish indeed that I could fulfill it adequately for I conceive it in the light of all that has been said to be a heavy one.

I have listened carefully to the debate and I think one thing stands out prominently, that on the one side there is a program and a plan (Great Applause) and on the other there is criticism and nothing to offer as the plan. (Great Applause)

Most of the speakers seem to be agreed upon the proposition that a part of citizenship is the

obligation of military service, that is, all but Dr. Aked. He has challenged that very fundamental proposition. He has attacked the proposition that a nation should bear arms even in its own defense.

Dr. Aked: Certainly not.

(Continuing)...He has contended in substance and in principle that all war and therefore all resistance must be wrong and he has set forth a beautiful, it is true, I admit, but an impractical idealism, (Great Applause), an idealism toward which the world may move slowly as it has moved in the past, but which cannot be realized at this day and in this hour under the conditions that confront the world, ...(Cries of “Hear” “Hear” and Great Applause)... and this doctrine, beautiful, idealistic as it is, is nothing but the doctrine of passivism and prostration. (Great Applause)

I am so firmly convinced that it is neither the doctrine nor the sentiment of the vast majority of the American people (Great Applause) that I feel justified in passing it with but a few words.

Dr. Aked has said that this nation ought not to look to war, but ought to turn its face away from the possibility of war. Ought not to consider the possibility of war after the Lusitania, after the Laconia, after the orders issued to this government to keep its citizens and its ships from the high seas on pain of destruction and after the attempt to set at work forces looking to the very

dismemberment of this Republic! (Prolonged Applause)

But we are agreed, I think, substantially upon the proposition that there is a military obligation of citizenship. We may interpret it differently, but we are agreed upon that fundamental fact. Now some of us are advocating as a part of the general plan of preparedness a measure of universal obligatory military training and service, but to that Dr. Berle and others take exception. And he said, among other things, that when we do adopt our plan that we must do it deliberately, after mature and careful thought and not in the present spirit of hysteria.

In God's name, my friends, when are we to act? (Applause) For two and a half years the American people, or those of them who were willing to think, must have realized that the time was coming when they would be called upon to be prepared, if they were to defend American rights effectively – for two years and a half. And yet today, at this hour, practically nothing more has been done than was done at the outbreak of the European War – some appropriation bills but neither munitions furnished nor men trained.

At this moment but 600,000 Springfield rifles in the United States, and yet every military authority of the country knows and will admit that it requires a supply of two and a half rifles per man per year to serve troops effectively in the field, without field guns, without heavy siege guns such as those that have been winning the battles on either side in Europe, without an air service and without even contracts let as yet to carry into effect the appropriation for the adequate

enlargement of our Navy.

That is our situation today and now the Congress of the country is asked to consider this bill for making the citizenship of the United States effective for defense, effective for the protection of American rights, if as is likely they may be called upon even within the next few days to meet that obligation and that situation.

What is it that is objected to in this measure? That it is compulsory? And yet every man who has studied even in the most cursory fashion the military history of this country knows that the volunteer system has failed in every crisis that the country has been called upon to meet. And yet we are to cling to it, are we, so that we may record another national failure when the crisis comes, so we are to cling to it and to send these young men out, untrained and unprepared, to die as a great sacrifice to national inefficiency and national refusal to look ahead?... (Cries of “Never,” “Never”)... The obligatory feature – Dr. Aked likened the system under a prescribed obligation of citizen’s service to a condition of slavery. He declared that it reduced the people in a degree to the condition and the state of mind of slaves.

Well, for my part I wish to heaven that the spirit of slavery might inspire every male citizen of the United States that inspired the men of France who have lived under that system for more than a generation to fight the Battle of the Marne. (Great Applause) To my mind, the system of universal obligatory training and service is the very antithesis of all that has been charged against

it and is in fact in its fundamentals essentially democratic, (Applause), because it recognizes not an obligation that each man may choose for himself, but an obligation that rests upon every man equally with his fellow, (Applause), an obligation that exempts none, an obligation that will not permit the country to call 150,000 of the best of its young men and take them from their economic pursuits and send them out to do the duty and to render the service that rests equally as an obligation upon every other man of the republic. And that condition we saw but a few months ago exemplified when the troops were sent down to the Mexican border.

If it were so easy to secure all the men that this country needs under the volunteer system, our Navy wouldn't be short today 30,000 men for the ships that it actually has ready for service, but it is, and the Navy finds it impossible to recruit up to a full complement. If it were so easy, the response in this department wouldn't find eighty odd thousand with a hundred odd thousand called. If it were so easy, the recruiting of the National Guard of the country would have been satisfactory in place of the condition that has actually existed since the enactment of the Hay Bill that attempted to perpetuate the volunteer system of this country.

Now the real question is: Are the people of the United States, are the people of a democracy capable of self-sacrifices, to impose upon themselves this obligation, just as they have imposed other obligations and other restraints? Are they sufficiently unselfish to be willing to render that brief period of service to their country that will fit them to become their country's defenders in case of need? I am reminded of the question that was asked as to the difference between the

training at Plattsburgh and obligatory military service. Well, I'll tell you. It is this. The kind of training for the period of time that is given at Plattsburgh would take not less than six years to prepare a man to be a thoroughly efficient corporal in the field. Furthermore, the Plattsburgh system being voluntary, recruits but an infinitesimal number and will continue to recruit but an infinitesimal number. What the country must have if it would secure a body of troops, trained and ready, that it may need at any time in a national emergency, is the obligation that brings all of the young men of a given age into camps like Plattsburgh and gives them the training long enough to make them efficient soldiers of the republic and lays upon them the obligation to go out on the call of their country and serve it in the field as they will then be capable of doing.

(Great Applause)

In the last analysis, the people of the United States must decide for themselves whether they have here anything that is worth fighting for, whether these institutions of self-government that we have built up are worth perpetuating, whether our western civilization and our social order are worth maintaining, whether we have ideals that are worth maintaining and if need be fighting for, whether we have principles that we propose to defend when challenged and if we answer that "Yes, that we have," then we must decide to prepare today if they are challenged. And gentlemen, they have been challenged, they have been challenged, and it may be that the time is now at hand when we shall be called upon to defend them.

We are not prepared today. We will not be prepared to carry that burden and that obligation

unless the men of this republic are trained and ready. We may look forward in the dim and distant future to a time when the principle of Internationalism shall have been developed to the point where there will be a complete brotherhood of nations. But for today I want to preserve it in this country, the principle and the ideal of Nationalism. (Great Applause) I want to see the people of the United States encouraged into a nation with a single purpose and a single ideal. I want to see them develop the national soul of the United States. And I want to see them make themselves efficient so that they may preserve it and perpetuate the institutions for which our forefathers were not afraid to fight and for which the men of '61 were not afraid to fight, in order that government, as Dr. Aked said, of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from this continent. And it is for us to resolve that nothing that we leave undone shall cause that government to perish in the future. (Great Applause)

End of Meeting