

The Economic Club of New York

115th Meeting

The Honorable James P. Pope
U.S. Senator from the State of Idaho

The Honorable William S. Sims
Retired Admiral, United States Navy

The Honorable Maury Maverick
U.S. Congressman, State of Texas

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Hotel Astor
New York City

The One Hundred and Fifteenth Meeting of the Economic Club of New York was held at eight-thirty o'clock at the Astor Hotel, New York, City, on Monday evening, February 10, 1936, Dr. Albert Shaw, Editor of "Review of Reviews," presiding.

Mr. Robert Erskine Ely: The President of the Economic Club of New York, Mr. James P. Warburg, recognizing what everybody has recognized, that Dr. Albert Shaw is one of the valiant fighters in the cause of better international understanding, has asked Dr. Shaw to preside at the meeting tonight. Mr. Warburg will be present, however, as one of the most interested auditors.

Another fact that ought to be mentioned is that Dr. Shaw is one of those who, a little matter of twenty-nine years ago – this being the one hundred and fifteenth meeting – was one of the founders of this Club. Dr. Shaw....(Applause)

Chairman Shaw: Mr. Ely, speakers of the evening, and gentlemen of the Economic Club: However much I might have been a fighter in the cause of good international relations, I have no fighting clothes on tonight. I am not here to take any part in the fighting at all, because I am under the strict injunction to introduce the speakers, and to waste no time in doing it.

I am sorry, though, that Mr. Warburg is not here to do it. He is a man of great force and authority, and we are all proud of him. (Applause) However, if he asks me to preside, then I am glad of the opportunity to do it.

We have heard a great many notable speakers in this room. When Mr. Bryan was about to enter upon his duties as Secretary of State, he came here and in this room he made one of the most noble orations on the cause of world peace I have ever heard.

I knew him well. I heard him speak on many occasions and on many subjects. I was a good friend of his, although usually in disagreement with him, but I never heard a better speech for peace. He was in the administration in the war with Mexico, and then, when the administration was reelected, having kept us out of war, somehow we found ourselves on the brink of one of the greatest wars in history.

I have no right to express an opinion tonight because, as I say, I am under the injunction to introduce the speakers. Mr. Ely does give me time, however, to say that Mr. Robert Walton Moore, the Assistant Secretary of State, is detained in Washington by his duties. A man of fine qualifications, a great scholar and thinker, and for many years a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, an associate of Cordell Hull, and a man who writes to me that we may go ahead with the discussion tonight because he, personally, is close to all this muddled topic of neutrality legislation, and is not of the opinion that we are at this moment of acute danger in a situation which may embroil us abroad.

Now I shall proceed to introduce the first speaker, the Honorable James P. Pope, Senator from Idaho. He is really not from Idaho; he is from the United States.

We are amiable people here and open-minded. In fact, we are the most open-minded body I know about, and when a Senator of the United States comes over here, this Club listens and gives rapt attention, and for pluck, character and wisdom this Club always shows its regard and respect.

I hope that Senator Pope will serve us as the Senator from the United States as long as his eminent colleague has served the country, and possibly he may serve his country not less responsibly nor less brilliantly. Take your time, say what you have to say, and Mr. Ely will tell you when your time is up.

The Honorable James P. Pope

Mr. Chairman, friends: Out of respect for you and in deference to the time I have at my disposal I am only going to present to you the thoughts that have occurred to me on this subject in the form of a manuscript. I hope, however, that I may present it to you interestingly.

Senator James P. Pope read his prepared paper as follows: (Remarks not transcribed)

Chairman Shaw: Senator, we are under obligation to you for so clear and logical an analysis of the pending situation. I think that most of us, perhaps, would believe that war should be prevented, but perhaps most of us believe that it can only be stopped by associated action of

nations. Then, of course, arises the question. What are nations? Are we to find rival empires working for their own projects under the guise of members of a collective organization or shall we have a genuine collective organization? And what shall we do meanwhile? Perhaps, meanwhile, those who want peace should be strong.

When I was in London last summer the man in America I found to be most looked up to in England was another of our guests and speakers tonight. Admiral Sims! (Applause) Now I think you cannot applaud him too much. Some of us American editors who were over there and who saw a great deal of American war activity, were privileged to give a dinner for him, and he promised to tell us all we wanted to know about submarine warfare. We kept him on his feet for three hours. We had no other guests but one. That was Lord Balfour, and he had been the Head of the Admiralty himself for a period, and said that he had tried to know all about these things. But when Admiral Sims got through answering our questions, Lord Balfour got up and asked if he could say a word. He said that he had studied these submarines deeply, as deeply as he could, and with as much anxiety, but that he had learned as much that evening from Admiral Sims on the subject of submarine warfare as he had ever learned before, although he had access to all the information available.

But whatever you say, Admiral Sims would always have great influence with me, and I think with all of us. Admiral Sims! (Extended Applause)

The Honorable William S. Sims

Mr. Chairman, gentlemen of the Economic Club, ladies and gentlemen: Do I understand the remarks of the chairman to mean that I should tell you about submarines or about neutrality?

I am afraid that I shall have to confess that I am here under rather false pretenses. When I was invited to come here to speak I understood that Mr. Ely assumed that I would be able to tell you something about this subject that would be worthwhile. Well, I rather doubted that myself, but I did not tell Mr. Ely so. As a matter of fact, the reason I accepted the invitation was to come here and learn something about this subject myself, and I hope that I shall be able to do so.

Only the other day I attended a conference of a number of important people and a number of students from the universities. That conference began at half past ten in the morning and ended at half past ten at night, and they didn't arrive at any conclusion at all. I did learn a great many things, but they were all different. (Laughter) There did not seem to be any agreement as to the facts upon which they could base a conclusion.

At the end of the conference, at the dinner, they had three students summarize for their particular groups. The summary went all the way from the most absolute isolation you have ever heard of to complete cooperation with the league. Isolation meaning that the United States should arrange their affairs so that they never should trade in the future, either in peace or in war, with anybody

except on this hemisphere, North and South America. What do you know about that? (Laughter)

Of course they had a tremendous objective. The objective was that we should keep out of war.

It has been stated that the late Will Rogers came to me one time during the war and said, "I can tell you how to put down the submarine menace." He said, "You want to raise the Atlantic Ocean to the boiling point." I said, "My dear Will, how are you going to do that?" Very airily he said, "I give you the great objective. It is up to you to work out the details."

Now in all of the conferences I have attended and in all of the books I have read on the subject, and the magazine articles and newspapers, with the very informative hearings in the Congress, I have not seen any definition at all, or any explanation of what the freedoms of the seas means, that is, in its results from the moral aspects. Of course, I am not naive enough to suppose that morality and humanity cut very much ice in the consultations of statesmen. But, all the same, it seems to me that I should give you my impression of the freedom of the seas and what its consequences mean to one who has witnessed some of it.

Let me give you a little example right on the shore. Suppose in the little town of Boston, of which you have heard, an insurrection or a revolution, or whatever you call it, breaks out we will say between South Boston and the Beacon Hill section. It will follow, in the ordinary course of military procedure, that they will find, probably, that in the narrow streets of Boston they will not be able to make much headway by a head-on collision. So, inevitably, they will try to blockade

each other.

Now the cities of Hartford and Springfield and Worcester are neutral, but they claim the freedom of the seas. They claim the right to supply South Boston from the sea, and they claim the right to supply North Boston through the railways, and moreover they claim that their state should get the militia to support them if necessary. That is what I mean by a trade that is immoral, indecent, and wrong.

Not let me apply that to the seas. Let me see if I can't put the decision in your minds that we went into the war shortly after the war broke out. Take this case: There is a war between Great Britain and Germany. Their everything is upset. Their trade is upset, their agriculture is upset, and they have millions of men at the front, and there is a great necessity for supplies.

Let us suppose, then, that Great Britain sends a navy ship manned with navy men across to America to get a series of products that they cannot get along without, such as copper, cotton, rubber, oil, and food – particularly food. If that ship succeeds in getting across with ten thousands of tons of those wholly essential products, it is a great benefit to them and a great detriment to Germany.

Similarly, then, if Germany could get a ship over and back it would be a great benefit to Germany and a great detriment to Great Britain. The acts of those ships are war acts. Nobody

would complain for a moment if the British shot down the German vessel or the Germans shot down the British vessel.

But, suppose that they have just sent a cablegram to New York and have asked the exporters to send them copper, cotton, and all the rest, in any ship at all, and that ship succeeds in getting through. It is just as much a detriment to Germany as it was in the case of the navy ship of the British that came across successfully, and it is just as much a benefit to Great Britain.

Similarly, if Germany telegrams over here and gets a ship. The point I want to make is this: the acts of the neutral ships are war acts, just as much as were the acts of those navy ships that came over with those products.

Now what happened? As soon as our preliminary depression was over, that trade started in. We were soon sending over 25 or 30 times as much cotton, rubber, coal, oil, and food to the Norwegian countries as we were before the war. Of course, we were sending everything that

France and Great Britain wanted to pay for.

Now that trade, in my mind, carried on by American citizens for their profit is just as immoral and just as inhuman as the trade I spoke of between those cities outside of Boston. There you have the urge for the profits in a war trade. It is a hard thing to say, but in the face of that,

pacifism cuts no ice.

I can give you certain examples of it. Of course you know what happened when President Jefferson proposed his embargo. You know that we nearly lost the New England States. They wanted to secede from the Union.

In the time of General Clinton, when he marched into the country in 1818, he stated in his memoirs that two-thirds of the beef and supplies for his army were coming from America, and he stated further that the reason he marched down the borders of Lake Champlain was to avoid interfering with the droves of cattle coming down the west side.

One would suppose, for example, that when the Allies were up against it in 1916 that the British government would have been able to stop the normal trade from the British Isles to the Norwegian countries. They were not able to do so. In a thoroughly documented book you can see the evidence of that. The book is called, "The Triumph of the Armed Forces," written by the British Naval Attache. I am told that an embargo on arms would cut very little ice. I am told that the money value of the munitions that a nation needs in case of war is only 5 percent of the value of the cotton and other supplies she has got to have in carrying on a war. And he proves to my satisfaction in his book that if Great Britain had been able to restrict that trade up to 1917, the war would have been ended very much sooner, probably in the early part of 1916, and we would be living in a different world today.

The United States is the most peace-loving nation in the world. It has always taken nearly the lead in measures to bring about world peace. It has always been willing to do anything it possibly could do except to make any economic sacrifices. (Laughter)

Now I do not know whether the various proposals that have been made for keeping us out of war are going to work. For some years, I have been advocating a certain measure to decrease the danger of our going into war. At the time it was first suggested, the public wasn't interested in it, and it attracted no attention.

The World Peace Foundation, last year, proposed a symposium on the question of how we can stay out of war. I had been speaking on that subject. In April I was out in the Midwest, and I was fully reported in one local paper, and to my surprise the Associated Press sent me a dispatch asking if I had been correctly quoted and asked me to expand my words further if I had. I did not do it because I was going on the radio in a week or so and the attitude I had been taking during the previous years and the attitude I took in that little radio speech was expressed in a measure which I believe will help very materially to take us out of war, and that is that this war trade that springs up, if allowed to expand, has so much pressure behind it that it cannot be stopped.

Therefore, if that war trade was placed at the risk of the trader, we would not be in such danger.

Here is what the difficulty is. There comes a crisis in every war, as in the World War, on every side, when there is a stalemate on land, and when everybody sees that if they do not stop the

tremendous trade flowing to the enemy there will be defeat, and that is why no treaty or international law will ever stop it. When a nation has its back to the wall, it will use every possible means to stop that trade.

I have never blamed the Germans at all for their submarine action. If we were in a similar position – to take the impossible case of a Japan and Canada war against us – and if the crisis came, and we saw we were going to be defeated, I would be the first to advocate an intensive submarine campaign, just as the Germans did.

What I mean is this: If we maintain the freedom of the seas, and claim that trade as a right, and let the traders claim that all the powers of our military forces are going to support them, we are bound to come up to the crisis when it arrives. That seems as sure as that the sun will rise tomorrow morning.

Now all of the previous efforts in neutrality, as Senator Vandenberg has said, heretofore has had as its object economic protection, first; and peace, second, as a by-product.

I am not willing to go further – I don't know enough about it. Having been so confused by the diversities of opinions, I am not prepared to go any further than to say that we ought to make sure that our policy will provide that the trade shall be at the risk of the trader.

In that little radio address, in ending, I said that the point of the whole business is this. We cannot keep out of war and at the same time enforce the freedom of the seas; that is, the freedom to make profits out of countries in a death struggle. If war arises we must, therefore, choose between great profits and grave risks of war, or smaller profits and less risk of war. And the time to make the choice is now, while we can think calmly and clearly, before war propaganda gets in its deadly work. To that end, we must come to understand that peace is priceless, and that a decent respect for humanity should be placed ahead of gold. Therefore, let every citizen who has the cause of peace at heart, take the stand that our trade as a neutral must be at the risk of the traders, and our army and navy must not be used to support this trader. It is a choice of profits or peace, and our country must remain at peace. (Extended Applause)

Chairman Shaw: Gentlemen, I think those were noble words from our distinguished Admiral who lives now, I think, as one of our great thinkers, and whose contributions to statesmanship are even greater than his contributions to his country.

Now, Mr. Maverick, I am not going to take any of your time from you in saying good things about you. I would rather say them after you have spoken. Mr. Maverick is here because we know that he has things to say to us, and because he says them well, and that is all the introduction he is needing. (Applause)

The Honorable Maury Maverick

Mr. Chairman, when a man comes up here to Yankeeland, he generally writes his speech, as did Senator Pope. I did the same thing, in fact in Philadelphia, last year, and tonight, too, I wrote my speech. But, the recent events that have occurred in the last week have caused me to pitch it out of the window, and I am going to speak from notes.

Now bad manners are so current nowadays by speakers all over the country that I might be a little bad-mannered myself, and say things to make you mad. However, people always get over being mad, so it doesn't make much difference after all, and besides, some very great speakers have done that in the last two or three weeks. (Laughter)

I was very glad to have heard the speech of the Admiral. And I want you, tomorrow, when you read about what he said in the papers, to read the last few lines of what he said, and figure out what it means, because those words are packed with meaning. It means sacrifice, and it means more coming from an Admiral than it would coming from me or from Washington.

As I say, in the last two weeks the changes have been rapid. I have been going all over the country in the last few months and I have come to know that the people are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to stay out of war. But what has happened recently? Everybody seems to have become scared over all these different minorities that have come up. The headlines of the

papers show that.

They seem to be coming in with a defeatist attitude, and they say, “Neutrality will not keep us out of war.” As one writer puts it, “Some participants have begun to call one another names.”

But that may relieve feeling, but it doesn’t help much.

Well, I am going to call a few names. I want to explain that, however. The other day when I was here, a man got up and said, “It is a lie that J.P. Morgan caused this war,” and everybody cheered. I thought that that fellow was pretty much of a demagogue. But I got thinking of myself and I remembered saying that J.P. Morgan did cause this war. Therefore, I was just as big a demagogue as anybody.

So my point there is that all this talk has nothing to do with it. We want to get into the facts of the case. There is no use attacking a person. Get at the facts. You should know the facts. If J.P. Morgan was the agent of the Allies, that is not necessarily a reflection on him. But it is important that we do know the facts so that we may not make the same mistakes all over again.

But, as I say, in the last few days we see the different attitudes coming up and we hear the businessmen talking of loss of business, and then, too, we see the administration – and I am for it – we see the administration going into cowardly retreat, and abandoning their policies of neutrality. They have abandoned their policies of neutrality and have given up the fight for

peace.

Then there are the Italian-Americans with their pressure, and the Borah-Johnson group, and I, personally do not see that they have done anything for peace. All I can see is that they have been against everything. They have been against the League of Nations, they have been against the World Court, they have been against disarmament and everything else, and now they are for the freedom of the seas, and the nationalistic and imperial doctrine of running along without any connection with anything.

Then, too, we have the Nye opposition to President Roosevelt, and then somebody who said Nye was a publicity seeker, as when Glass did the same thing when he wrapped a napkin around his hand and posed before the press. That didn't help peace any.

And then we find in the papers where Mr. Pittman of Nevada, with a population of 80,000 people, he almost proclaims war against Japan. In other words, there is a prejudice and stupidity from all people, including businessmen. (Laughter)

Now let me talk in non-technical language of the difference between the old and the new neutrality. The old neutrality was of the sort whereby we could sell all we wanted to sell, and make as much profit as we pleased. That, in short, was the old idea of neutrality.

The new idea of neutrality is that we make a temporary sacrifice in order to avoid a greater sacrifice later on. Personally, I think it is just a matter of long-range thrift.

We must have embargoes and quotas and restrictions of various kinds, and I am of the opinion that it is cheaper in the long-run and that it is good business sense. The American people are willing to make the sacrifice, but I cannot understand, personally, what it is that has happened in the last few days or weeks. This thing was all ready to go through, and suddenly it stops.

Let our minds go back to the World War, for a moment. When the World War started, the English got control of the cables and they let the type of news get through that they wanted to come into this country. Go back and read the New York Times and the Herald of that time. Then we argue that the submarines caused the World War! But now, I think, it is pretty well agreed that shipping and business and profit led us into that war. It was the collapse of a war boom that we got up, and when it collapsed we went into the war. Some people say, still, that it was these submarines that caused the whole thing. Well, of course, if we had not done that shipping and had not had the war boom we would not have had trouble with the submarines. And that's that.

Now there are people who believe in neutrality as isolationist. What we were trying to do was to have economic isolation and at the same time to have economic participation (Laughter) and so, by the latter we finally got into the war. Therefore, it seems to me that the sensible thing is to restrict the economic participation, as much as we can.

There has been a great argument amongst ourselves as to which of the bills is the best. That is beyond thinking of now. All we hope for now is to get some kind of decent legislation. I am going to describe, briefly, a little about the Administration's bill. Section 4, you know, is the one over which all the argument arises. The argument is over the war materials and the commodities, and so on. And so, in order to make a concession, the Administration put in there that there be exceptions made as to food, clothing, and medicine.

But food means cattle, hogs, and all kinds of animal foods. It means wheat and corn, and all of those things. Then clothing includes cotton and, in fact, all the things that go into clothing. Then the proposition is that when you begin to make exceptions, the copper people come in and they say, "We think that copper ought to go in there because it will just be for peaceful purposes." and the result is that when you begin that sort of thing, everything goes in. Therefore, I believe that these things should be placed on a quota so there should not be an excess of the normal peacetime requirements permitted.

And now I am going to discuss the attitude of certain businessmen, but I want to state that there are so many who seem to think that there is a tremendous pressure brought by the big industrialists on Congress. As far as I am concerned, I have not seen that to be the case. I think they have sense enough to want to stay out of a war, but there are some people who think you are exerting this pressure. Therefore, if you want to do something really good, it will be to let people

know that you are not exerting pressure about this commodity business.

In Texas we have cotton and oil. We have wells down there that can produce 30,000 barrels a day, that have been cut down. Now of course, if we had a war, we could increase production. But I take the position, personally, that if my people want to kill people, I am just not for it.

(Applause)

But I want to say this. I went to Houston and to Galveston, a while ago, and made some speeches in which I said, “We would cut the oil off altogether,” and I was not criticized for it, either in Houston or in Galveston, or in Texas. And I think that that ought to be known by the country as a whole, but it is not. (Applause)

I am only asking that the businessmen take a common-sense attitude. Did we get anything out of the last war? No. Did it stabilize business? No. Did it stabilize government? No.

Now you know, one of the strangest things to me is that the Senate, holding hearings on the subject of neutrality, has held them in secret. I have asked for information time and again, and I cannot get any. I tried, for example, to get the speech made by Mr. Moore from the Senate Committee, and I couldn't. But this morning I received a copy of the testimony of Mr. Moore from the New York Chamber of Commerce. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that I might as well become a member of the New York Chamber of Commerce and then I can get

information on what is going on in the Senate. (Laughter)

On the way up on the train I read this thing. It starts out by saying that the best guarantee of the peace and safety and the lives of our citizens is a strong military protection of our national defense. But don't you think we are doing well in the appropriations for the army? A billion dollars a year, and that is all the New York Chamber of Commerce has to offer is a bigger army and navy! Is that all the imagination those men have?

Then it goes on to say, in effect, that the Chamber of Commerce recognizes the high ideals of Congress, and I appreciate that. (Laughter) But it goes on to say, "But it would involve us in foreign entanglements, although the general opinion of the people is against foreign entanglements." I just cannot see any sense in that at all. I cannot see where, if we have neutrality and do not have economic participation, that that will cause us to have foreign entanglements.

Now there is another one here that says that your special committee on National Defense is of the opinion that extreme neutrality bills being discussed in Congress will have the effect of seriously weakening our national defense. But I certainly do not see why. And there is claim that the Monroe Doctrine is being violated. But the Monroe Doctrine is accepted in all the bills, so that doesn't count.

It says that Congress drastically limits our trade. Then it says that foreign markets have already been seriously depleted by agricultural legislation – recently terminated. What does that mean? What do they mean by agricultural legislation? Of course, I know that it means that the cotton trade and those other kinds of businesses have been cut down by legislation, but it seems to me that the intimidation is that they want to make it up by warfare. That's the way it looks, anyway, because this thing doesn't interfere with peace time trade. None of the bills do.

And now I am going to mention something about the Americans of Italian extraction. They are as good as any others; they are no different from the rest, and it is not necessary for them to protest their Americanism to me. But I am going to ask them to remember what happened to the German-Americans just before the war. They were called "hyphenated Americans" by everybody, and the Italians ought to look to that. And they say it would be unjust to small nations. Well, I don't know how big Abyssinia is but it just does not seem logical at all. Let's compare it with the World War – this situation.

Suppose that Abyssinia could make a loan, for concessions of oil and so on; and we should start shipping large amounts of war material to Abyssinia. The Italians would then, very sensibly, take their submarines and sink our ships. Then where would the Italians be? They would be in the same shape as were some of our German-Americans before we entered the war.

I want to give you an example of some of the propaganda from some of the Italian-American

organizations. It is this: “More than five million Italians have a legitimate interest in the land of their forefathers.” Why have they a legitimate interest in the land of their forefathers? Why? That is the same as to say that I have a legitimate interest in England and in France. But I say that they have no more interest than I have or anybody else has in the land of his forefathers. (Applause) And then comes the clinching argument of the Italians and that is: “Why should we take up a problem like the neutrality laws in the midst of a presidential campaign?”

Now what is that? What does that mean? Does that mean that we should stop what we are doing in Congress just because there is a presidential campaign on? That is a threat of five million votes, that is all. But the point is that that is the kind of a threat that no honorable man can stand for or pay any attention to whatsoever. (Extended Applause)

Now I want to make this conclusion. I believe I have already made it, but I want to make it plain, and that is that no racial group is entitled to any special consideration whatsoever, no matter who it is or what it is. (Applause)

Now I want to go somewhat into the philosophy of Mr. John Bassett Moore who recently gave a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And I am sure he did because I have the proceedings from the New York Chamber of Commerce. (Laughter) I want to call to your mind that recently one of my Republican colleagues introduced a professor and he said, “I wish to introduce this man of sound intelligence.” He introduced him as a man who was to discuss a

matter of international law. I introduced a professor afterward, and I said, “Of course I am a Democrat, and therefore the man I introduced is only a Brain-Truster.” And so when these professors talked, if you believed in the one, then he is “a sound student of economy” and if you did not believe in him, then he is simply a “brain-truster.” And so, if I wanted to, I could call Mr. Moore a Brain-Truster, but he is of such an age that I do not want to do it.

He said that we were guilty of suicidal mania, and he said that these doctrines are falsely propagated and ignorantly believed, and so on. And he spoke of “well meaning but uninformed people.” Well, that is for me, I suppose, and for the various ones in favor of neutrality.

But what does all that mean? I think that it means that Mr. Moore has approached it from the emotional approach, because when you accuse a man of being a suicidal maniac that does seem to me to be a little emotional.

And Moore says it is all for the purpose of permitting the president to cooperate with the League. But of course things have changed since 1914, and he complains of sanctions with Italy, and he proclaims the right of small nations, and he says it would create the worst form of dictatorship, and so forth.

Now I want to bring out this, that President Wilson had unlimited power during the war because there was no law on the subject, and when the country was finally in favor of the war he went

before Congress and Congress voted for the war. But if we have neutrality legislation it will give the president considerably less power than the presidents ever had before, and it will put such power more into the hands of the Congress of the United States and more into the hands of the people of the United States.

And now I want to make my final appeal. We got into the last war without any international law. There was no League then. There was no collective action of any kind. There was nothing. And we got in there on a concept of Freedom of the Seas, and Enforcing our Neutrality Rights. We had political and economic participation and so we got in. But I want to appeal to you businessmen here. I know that it is probable that maybe five or ten percent of you are not for the president and are not for the Democratic Administration, (Laughter) and sometimes I think that possibly that feeling that exists between businessmen and the president may be a little returned. But I want to tell you, seriously, I want to tell you that this duty that comes before the American people today transcends Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Glass, or all the Republicans and Democrats in the world. Let the world know that you, as businessmen are willing to make some sacrifice. Then, maybe, you can save your own boys from having to go to war. (Extended Applause)

Chairman Shaw: Mr. Maverick and the Admiral and the Senator are all of them Honorary Members of this Club for life, I am sure.

And now the man who for thirty years has been our Master of Ceremonies, the man who initiated

the movements of this Club, and who has kept this Club going in all these years is going to take charge for the rest of the program with the understanding that our Senator and our Admiral and our brilliant Texan are going to have ten minutes apiece when this panel affair is finished. Mr. Ely, will you please step to the front?

Mr. Ely: Please do not be alarmed! A time schedule that seems impossible will be successfully carried out if you applaud inwardly to a considerable extent rather than audibly.

And now four men will show themselves men of unusual character and intelligence because they will make it unnecessary for me to call them down, and they will go for the subject and for the speakers and for this country and for all other countries and everything else, in the most pointed manner possible.

Professor Philip Caryl Jessup of Columbia University will speak for five minutes. (Applause)

...Professor Jessup read his paper as follows... (Remarks not transcribed)

Mr. Ely: Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard, Contributing Editor of The Nation. (Applause)

Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: Let me merely say that in my judgment no neutrality law will by itself insure peace to the United States. That neutrality legislation can and, in time, will be worked out to decrease markedly the risks of our being

drawn into war, I firmly believe, and I am certain that public opinion in the United States overwhelmingly demands this. There may be phases of the neutrality problem through which the experts have not yet been able to see their way, since the whole undertaking is a venture upon uncharted seas, the writing of a new page in international law and international relations.

But I can see no reason by we cannot try some things. Why, for example, we cannot forbid the export of capital and credits to belligerents, why we cannot prevent the tying-up of a large portion of our manufacturing interests to the wheels of one or the other of our belligerents, as happened during the last war by the placing of some \$3,000,000,000 worth of orders in this country through the agency of J.P. Morgan and Company.

It is idle to assert that that business did not bias a considerable section of our manufacturers, agriculturists and the general public in favor of the Allies. But we could very easily have been put into the war even if we had not been integrated to the British war machine. Should we in the next war have men in the government like McAdoo, Page, Lansing, Colonel House and later perhaps Woodrow Wilson himself, to take the ground that it is quite right to purchase a continuance of a war-time boom prosperity by the lives of American youths – 182,000 of them in the last case – we shall again go to war. No mere neutrality legislation will prevent such leaders from again confusing the safety of democracy and the aim to end all war with the desire to safeguard our prosperity and put us into war with the profiteers by what our present Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, with commendable frankness has recently characterized as “blood money,” namely the profits of munitions making.

Sound neutrality legislation, yes, by all means, exactly as we should guard ourselves against any repetition of foreign propoganda so far as that can be achieved. Everything that will help to keep us out of the next struggle. But beyond that, to be sure of remaining at peace, we must have the rigid restriction of the power of any president and his advisors to put this country into war. For it is a simple, indisputable fact that the power to make war has long since passed from Congress, into whose hands it is squarely placed by the Constitution, into those of the president.

Mr. Wilson put us into war at least five times, with Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Germany. It is certainly war when the Commandant of the United States Marines official reports that his soldiers have killed more than 3,000 men in Haiti, and adds that he regrets to state that many of these deaths were inexcusable. Both James Ford Rhodes and Walter Millis confirm the fact that Mr. McKinley maneuvered Congress to declare war upon Spain after he had received Spain's complete surrender to all our demands, which information McKinley withheld from Congress and the people.

In the recently published memoirs of the Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, he states that if the German U-boats had not begun their inhuman work again we should have gone to war with England instead of Germany. In other words, no matter what neutrality legislation, or any other kind of legislation we may have, short of a national referendum on war, any president can maneuver us through his diplomacy or his personal actions to the brink of war and present

Congress with a situation in which only a declaration of war is possible. Modern propaganda by radio and press and movies, the sad readiness of our newspapers to follow a presidential lead without inquiry or question, and the tremendous power of the president to crush opposition ruthlessly as Mr. Wilson did in the case of the twelve “wilful men” who filibustered against his Armed Ship Bill, especially if a great portion of the business world is clamoring for war largely because of a great financial stake – all these make the Chief Executive the dominating power in the matter of war and peace.

In conclusion, I favor the tying of the hands of the president at every possible point by as wise neutrality legislation as can possibly be drafted when we are utterly without precedent to guide us. I believe that if Secretary Bryan’s embargo on loans in the early part of the war had been enacted into law by Congress that would have helped a great deal to prevent the development of the situation which actually arose. But the greatest safeguard will be the transfer of the war-making power to the people of the United States. The extraordinary referendum held by the British League of Nations Union less than a year ago has largely determined the neutral or unneutral position of England as to the war in Ethiopia, and has demonstrated the ease and the success with which a nation may be polled on issues of war and peace. I thank you. (Applause)

Mr. Ely: Mr. Allen W. Dulles, Joint author of “Can We Be Neutral?” (Applause)

...Mr. Allen W. Dulles read his paper on the subject, “Is Neutrality Legislation the Road to

Peace?” as follows....(Remarks not Transcribed)

Mr. Ely: Mr. J. Calvin Brown, Publicist. (Applause)

...Mr. J. Calvin Brown read his prepared paper as follows...

Short Address by J. Calvin Brown

I have been allotted five minutes to dispose of this subject. In my opinion that is more time than this whole subject deserves from our Administration and Congress at a time when they are loaded to the waterline with mountains of more important and more pressing problems which are about to sink them.

In the first place American Neutrality Legislation is an effort to guide Europe into peaceful habits and, since we have demonstrated that we are incapable of managing our own rich estate without wrecking it, it seems to me to be bad taste to try to tell Europe how to run the rest of the world.

Such legislation is either designed to keep us out of war or to stop other nations by closing our cupboard. If the former, it seems to me, we could decide when incidents arose and if the latter, then is it to keep us out of the present African war, or some hypothetical war in the future.

We have covered the present war so it all boils down to whether we shall in 1936, fix a rigid position we must take in a war which may come in 1946, or attend to our own pressing problems now and use our common sense in 1946.

It is plain to anyone that if we refuse to traffic with nations at war, we are simply joining the stronger combatant. We also know that England would never be insane enough to join us and fix her position in a hypothetical war and so, if England wanted to steal our commerce in two nations all she would have to do would be to maneuver them into war with each other and gobble our business.

If, by chance, she has forgotten how to do this, she only needs to refresh her memory by opening her history book at random and read. Suppose, later on, Germany declared war on France and we were barred from trading with either. We would, in practice be joining Germany and, since we would not do that, Congress would promptly repeal our Neutrality Law and act as circumstances warranted.

Since, therefore, any law we pass now would be scrapped whenever a future war came, why bother to pass one? It is not only a waste of time, but it is positively dangerous. All of us who know what is really going on in Europe under the sugar coating know, among other things, that German ambitions and plans are fomenting into greater and greater pressure toward explosive expansion and if we seem to fix a rigid neutral commercial position it may be the very match

which lights the fuse of terror.

Why bother with this idealistic project or flirt with the dangerous intrigues of Europe. Every time we have interfered in that arena we have not only lost our own shirt but we have stirred up hornets nests in Europe. The tenacity with which we cling to a belief that we can direct the behavior of Europe is like a man's fourth marriage – the triumph of hope over experience.

Our people declared emphatically against our participating in the League of Nations, yet every time the League had a subject they wanted to lure us into, they formed a “pup” League, called a “Conference” and we walked right in and were picked as clean as a Mexican dog.

We went to Versailles and fixed new frontiers which teemed with causes for future wars and then we forced the simultaneous signing of the League covenant which guaranteed that, in future, no nations would ever quarrel more violently than verbally. We created the “Dawes Plan” which let vast German payments in kind enter all Allied markets free from customs duties which kept our goods out. We issued a debt moratorium which stopped all debt payments and went far toward driving England off of gold and into protective tariffs against us. We went to the London Economic Conference which resulted in establishing a gold bloc of nations who were forced to bar our goods to protect their currencies. We dabbled through three Administrations with the ridiculous Disarmament Conference which finally stirred up a mad armament race which we led. We signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact which outlawed war when we knew that no one who signed

it would pay any attention to it unless it had teeth, that none of them would agree to supply their share of the teeth or trust anyone else to run the thing if it had teeth. When the League was recently debating sanctions – we beat them to it. All the time our leaders are complaining about gluts of exportable surpluses which are crushing us.

If I were the Administration and Congress, this is how I would handle this Neutrality Legislation wrangle. I would take one scared look at the pile of domestic troubles on my desk, refuse to go out to meet or invent any more troubles and hire a hall in which anyone who wanted to could talk themselves out on the subject and then I would follow the example of the New York Sun which, in a recent edition carried headlines, “John Bassett Moore used 10,000 words on the idea” and I would ask for the total score when everyone was talked out, but not the details.

This whole din reminds me of Abraham Lincoln’s little Illinois River steamboat which had an eight foot whistle and a four foot boiler and, whenever the whistle blew, the machinery stopped. Shut off the whistles and let common sense function.

Mr. Ely: It is now seventeen minutes past ten o’clock, and Admiral Sims says that he doesn’t care to speak his full ten minutes but, no doubt, you would be willing to reply to questions, Admiral Sims. And Senator Pope is willing to reply to questions. And Mr. Maverick would like to have his say for about five minutes and in the rest of his time he would like to answer questions. So the members of the panel are invited to put as pungent questions as possible to the

individual speakers. Are there questions from the members of the panel? Are there any questions from the floor? We have got about five minutes.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR: I would like to ask which one of the speakers will stand in back of the human problem, the problem of lives, rather than the commercial aspects of the problem. I would like to ask Admiral Sims.

ADMIRAL SIMS: Well, as far as I can make out from all the discussion I have heard, the commercial interest in all of these problems absolutely submerges everything else, as far as I can see. Personally I would do everything I could to prevent a war, both on the personal ground and on the ground of our own nation.

Now I recently have been to 25 or 30 cities, all the way from Oklahoma and Kansas and thence to the Middle West and East. In most of my addresses at these various occasions I have usually come around to this business of how can we stay out of a war. And I want to tell you this, that the impression I got from the response of those audiences is that the people of the United States are practically a union in wanting to stay out of war.

When it is explained to those people that 52 nations of the world have taken an action against an aggressor and that if that action can be made good and the aggressor trampled down, it is the most hopeful thing for the peace of the future we have had so far.

I have pointed out that although the United States is not a member of the League and is not technically bound to abide by its decisions, still if people will forget that there is a League of Nations and only consider that 52 nations of the world have declared this man an aggressor, and will consider that we are still a member of Christian civilized nations, it is that that counts. I have asked my audiences, “Don’t you think that we are normally bound to help these 52 nations to help put down the aggressor?” And they have responded to it.

MR. BROWN: I would like to ask Admiral Sims if he has fully considered the devastating effect it may have if the power of Mussolini over his Italian people is destroyed by defeat of his purpose. What, for instance, will happen to Italy? What will happen to the rest of Europe by possible actions of Communist movements, and so forth, in Southern Europe, which may become active?

ADMIRAL SIMS: That is easily answered. I do not know. But I will ask if you are in favor of our sustaining Italy in her aggression? Do you want Italy to be punished for her aggression or to be rewarded?

MR. BROWN: I would answer that by saying that the troublesome point in that whole affair in Africa is that it has advanced to such a position now that it means the loss of prestige, either by England or by Mussolini, and the loss of prestige by either one would be devastating to world

peace. The problem is not so much neutrality legislation, in my opinion, it is to seek some varied and delicate manner of ending that thing so as to allow both parties to bow out without destructive loss on either side.

ADMIRAL SIMS: Well, all I have got to say about those remarks is that I totally disagree with the speaker.

MR. ELY: Now it seems to be the wish of the majority that we should hear Congressman Maverick again, and he will speak for just ten minutes and after that, unless something happens, Dr. Shaw will declare the meeting adjourned.

The Honorable Maury Maverick

I am going to try to answer one or two of these questions first.

I will say that as far as Mussolini is concerned, and as far as neutrality is concerned, my idea is that whether he is the dictator of Italy or not, it is no concern of anybody's. I don't give a damn whether he is the head of Italy or not. It is none of my business, and it is none of anybody's business. It is none of anybody's business who is the President of the United States, except Americans; and it is nobody's business who is the ruler of Italy except Italians.

It is easy to get up and criticize everything that has been done. I know, too, that the League was a

failure, the League of Nations, and the Disarmament activities, and so forth. But because some things are failures does it necessarily hold, then, that everything is a failure, and that we should not do anything? If you had ten children, and nine of them were killed, would you therefore say, “Kill the other one?”

It seems to me that a Congressman’s duty is to try to save the country from going into another war. (Applause)

Now there seems to be the question as to whether we could maintain neutrality with England or not. I do not know. But I believe that there is a sort of Anglo-Saxon historical concept and tradition in the minds of all Americans. We have forgotten the Revolution. We didn’t go to war on account of ordinary trade. We went to war because of a war boom where we sold thousands of units where we used to sell only hundreds of units of commodities. Now it seems to me that if we had had a quote at that time, and a United States economy set up to go along in the even tenor of its ways, we would not have had the boom we did have.

Now we have talked a good deal about international law and neutrality, and I want to mention something else concerning what Mr. Moore has said. He said that the United States being involved in the war is destitute of foundation and that it is inconceivable that the United States will ever abandon the freedom of the seas.

Now here is what Mr. Warren says on that subject. Mr. Warren says, “Hence, the situation confronting the United States today is not that a single neutral right of ours is recognized by the other countries to any greater extent than during the war, 1914 - 1917.” He then says that the exertion of force is likely to be carried beyond legal bounds during a war. And then he says that nevertheless, after these wars are over, governments come back to the observance of such laws. In other words, that means that we have the paper and the law, but no practical effect from it. And it seems to me that if the law is not obeyed during a war, it is certainly of no benefit to the people of the United States.

Now I do not like to say this, because it sounds dramatic. I was in the war. I am a veteran of the war. That doesn't prove anything, though. When you speak of a veteran it generally means something about the bonus. But I am going to say this. I went to France and I got wounded, you know, and it was not because I was so very brave, either, but because I happened to get in the way of a bullet. But it seems to me that the same people that got us into the last war are trying to get us into the next war. I suddenly realized I am an old man, since the war days, and those men that got us in the war last time were men of 40, last time, who had not had experience on the battlefield. And any man that has had experience on the battlefield would try to keep them out of war. I have got my kid in a military school, but I hope he does not ever have to use what knowledge he has.

Now I want to make this point with reference to the question of neutrality and international law.

Now we have only two alternatives: either collective action or not collective action. In other words, we have got to think clearly on this subject. It doesn't do us any good to talk of our failures. Let us get to the facts. We have got to have collective action or neutrality.

The League of Nations has been defeated and Disarmament has been defeated, and anyway we can't get into those groups within the next few weeks. So we have got to do something now, and that is to do something about neutrality. And I think we should have a neutrality that controls the President of the United States, and a people that makes some sacrifices so that we may stay out of war. And if we proclaim ourselves as being the cock of the walk, and send our ships across the seas to make money and pick trouble for ourselves, we are sure to go to war. So the only thing we can do now is to have neutrality.

Some say that civilization is about to be destroyed, but at least let us have the United States, then, for civilization. And so I say to you that the most clear-thinking policy we can have is to have neutrality, and neutrality of a strict type, for the United States of America. I thank you.

(Extended Applause)

Chairman Shaw: Gentlemen, I am sure that we are all very gratefully appreciative of the trouble that our guests have taken to come to speak to us tonight, and I think, as we adjourn, we ought to rise and give them a vote of thanks.

....The audience arose and applauded the speakers...The meeting adjourned at ten-thirty o'clock...