

HOOVER DECLARES THAT THE REJECTION OF LONDON PACT WOULD BE DISASTROUS TO U. S.

Washington, July 7.—Failure to ratify the London Naval Treaty would plunge the world backward from its progress toward peace, President Hoover told the Senate in a special message today in opening the session for consideration of the treaty.

"The only alternative to this treaty is the competitive building of navies with all its flow of suspicion, hate, ill-will an ultimate disaster," the President declared.

Speedy action was urged upon the Senate in the 1,800-word document setting forth in detail Mr. Hoover's interpretation of the treaty and answering arguments which have been made against it by the comparatively small Senate group fighting its ratification.

Nine more Senators than the 49 required to obtain a quorum answered the roll call when the special session met at noon. This made certain the treaty debate would open at once.

Vice-President Curtis appointed Senators Watson, Republican, Indiana, and Walsh, Democrat, Montana, to inform Mr. Hoover the senate was ready to receive any communications he might desire to make. The Senate recessed for 15 minutes awaiting the President's treaty message.

Views of President

"This treaty does mark an important step in disarmament and in world peace," the President declared. It is important for many reasons that it should be dealt with at once. The subject has been under discussion since the Geneva conference three years ago.

"The lines of this treaty have been known and under discussion since last summer. The actual document has been before the American people and before the Senate for nearly three months. It has been favorably reported by the senate foreign relations committee.

"Every solitary fact which affects judgment upon the treaty is known, and the document itself comprises the sole obligation of the United States.

"If we fail now the world will be again plunged backward from its progress toward peace."

Mr. Hoover struck vigorously at the Senatorial opposition and declared his belief that the overwhelming majority of the American people "are opposed to the conception of these groups."

The President's message was as follows:

To the Senate:

"In requesting the Senate to convene in session for the special purpose of dealing with the treaty for the limitation and reduction of naval armaments signed at London, April 22, 1930 it is desirable that I should present my views upon it. This is especially necessary because of misinformation and misrepresentation which has been widespread by those who in reality are opposed to all limitation and reduction in naval armaments. We must naturally expect opposition from those groups who believe in unrestricted military strength as an objective of the American nation. Indeed, we find the same type of minds in Great Britain and Japan in parallel opposition to this treaty. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of the American people are opposed to the conception of these groups.

Treaty is Safeguarded

Our people believe that military strength should be held in conformity with the sole purpose of national defence. They earnestly desire real progress in limitation and reduction of naval arms of the world, and their aspiration is for abolition of competition in the building of arms as a step toward, world peace. Such a result can be obtained in no other way than by international agreement.

"The present treaty is one which holds these safeguards and advances these ideals. Its ratifications is in the interests of the United States. It is fair to the other participating nations. It promotes the cause of good relations.

"The only alternative to this treaty is the competitive building of navies with all its flow of suspicion, hate, ill-will and ultimate disaster. History supports those who hold to agreement

as the path to peace. Every naval limitation treaty with which we are familiar, from the Rush-Bagot agreement of 1817, limiting vessels of war on the Great Lakes, to the Washington Arm Treaty of 1921, has resulted in a marked growth of good will and confidence between the nations which were parties to it.

"It is folly to think that because we are one of the richest nations in the world we can outbuild all other countries. Other nations will make any sacrifice to maintain their instruments of defense against us, and we shall eventually reap in their hostility and ill-will the full measure of the additional burden which we may thus impose upon them. The very entry of the United States into such courses as this would invite the consolidation of the rest of the world against us and bring our peace and independence into jeopardy. We have only to look at the state of Europe in 1914 to find ample evidence of the futility and danger of competition in arms.

Imposes Limitation

"It will be remembered that in response to recommendations from the

senate a conference between the United States, Great Britain and Japan, for limitation of those categories of naval arms not covered by Washington treaty of 1921 was held at Geneva in 1927. That conference failed because the United States could not agree to the large size of fleets by other governments. The standards set up at that time would have required an ultimate fleet of about 1,400,000 tons for the United States. As against this the total United States fleet set up under this treaty will be about 1,120,000 tons.

Primary Function.

"Defense is the primary function of government, and therefore our first concern in examination of any act of this character is the test of its adequacy in defense. No critics has yet asserted that, with the navies provided in this agreement together with our army, our aerial defense and our national resources, we cannot defend ourselves and certainly we want no military establishment for the purpose of domination of other nations. Our naval defense position under this treaty is the more clear if we examine our present naval strength in comparison to the present strength of the other nations, and then examine the improvements in this proportion which will result from this treaty.

This improvement arises from the anticipation of parity in battleships to

be reached 10 years hence under the Washington Arms treaty and the fact that other nations have been building in the classes of ships not limited by that treaty, while we, until lately, lagged behind.

On January 1 last the total naval tonnage disregarding paper fleets, and taking only those ships actually built and building was, for the United States 1,180,000 tons; for the British Empire 1,332,000 tons; for Japan, 768,000 tons. That is if the United States navy were taken as 100, then the British navy equals 113 and the Japanese navy, 65.

Ratio Under Treaty

Under this treaty the United States will have 1,123,000 tons; Great Britain 1,151,000 tons, and Japan 714,000 tons, or a ratio of 100 for the United States to 102.4 for Great Britain and 63.6 for Japan. The slightly larger tonnage ratio mentioned for Great Britain is due to the fact that her cruiser fleet will be constituted more largely by smaller vessels, weaker in gun power, but the United States has the option to duplicate the exact tonnage and gun calibre of the British cruiser fleet if we desire to exercise it.

"The relative improvement in the position of the United States under this treaty is even better than this statement would indicate.

In the more important categories, battleships, aircraft carriers, 8-inch

and 5-inch cruisers—that is, omitting the secondary arms of destroyers and submarines—the fleet built and actually building on January 1 of this year was 809,000 tons in the United States 1,088,000 tons in Great Britain and 586,000 tons in Japan, or upon the basis of 100 for the United States it was 134 for Great Britain and 70 for Japan. Under this treaty the United States will on January 1, 1937, possess completely 911,000 tons of these major units, Great Britain 948,000 tons and Japan 556,000 tons.

In addition the United States will have one 40,000 ton-inch cruiser two thirds completed. This will give a ratio in these categories of 100 for the United States to 102.9 for Great Britain and 60.5 for Japan. The reason for the excess British tonnage is again as mentioned above. In other words, the United States, in these categories, increases by 102,000 tons, Great Britain decreases by 140,000 tons and Japan decreases by 12,000 tons. These readjustments of units are to take place during the next 6 years. The treaty then comes to an end except for such arrangements as may be made than for its continuance.

Cruiser Strength

"The major discussion has been directed almost wholly to the fact that the United States is to have 18 cruisers with 8-inch guns, with an aggregate tonnage of 180,000 tons, as against Great Britain's 15 such ships,

with a tonnage of 146,800 tons and Japan's 12 such ships of a tonnage of 108,400 tons; the United States supplementing this tonnage with cruisers armed with 6-inch guns up to a total of 208,800 tons. The larger gross tonnage to Great Britain as stated being compensation for the larger gun calibre of the American cruiser fleet, but as said, the United States has the option to duplicate the British fleet, it is so desires.

Criticism of this arrangement arises from the fact that the general board of the United States navy recommended that to reach parity with Great Britain the United States should have three more of the 10,000 ton cruisers (21 instead of 18), with 8-inch guns, and a total of 315,000 tons or 8,000 tons less total cruisers tonnage than this treaty provides that instead of this 30,000 tons more of 8-inch ships recommended by the general board, we will have 38,000 tons of ships armed with 6 inch guns, there being no limitation upon the size of cruisers up to 10,000 tons.

Disagreement Slight

Therefore, criticism revolves around less than 3 per cent of our whole fleet and, even within this 3 per cent comes the lesser question of whether 30,000 tons of ships armed with 8-inch guns are better than 38,000 tons armed with 6-inch guns. The opinion of our high naval authorities is divided on the relative merits of the two plans.

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