

DR. METCALFE TALKS AT ROTARY MEETING

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concerned, I think we are all fairly well agreed; in fact, the noble efforts made to abolish war as an instrument for settling the national disputes of the world were given birth by the grim aspect of war, with its death and plunder, hardship and suffering. Many of our heroes, whose praises we sing to this day, won their immortality on the battle fields or on the high seas of wars in which our country has been engaged. Truly, we are indebted to them, as well as to the thousands of noble heroes, living and dead, who gave generously and unstintingly of their time, energy and resources in periods of emergency. It is true that, as a nation, we have waged war successfully and this gives rise to the question on which my talk is based: Are we, as a nation, waging peace successfully?

I mentioned, in a general way, the evil consequences of war, with which we are all familiar. Let us now turn our attention, for a moment, to the evils and consequences of peace. I refer specifically to the heavy toll of human life and limb being sacrificed each year in this country through accidents. This week the National Safety council will meet to arrange for a safety week throughout the U. S.

During the year 1928 over 95,000 persons in this country lost their lives through accidents. Think of it! A larger toll of human life during one year of peace that we lost during our participation in the World war. We thought that was a terrible loss, when so many lives were lost in war, yet I am afraid we pay little or no attention when the same number of lives are lost in peace time. In addition to those killed through accidents, 10,000,000 other persons were injured. As a nation, we suffered a monetary loss, direct and indirect, estimated at \$10,000,000,000 during 1928. We are wont to think of our places of work as the source of most accident, but it may surprise you to know that 28,000 fatalities occurred on our streets and highways in 1928 and in 1929, 32,500 fatalities, and another 27,000 other persons lost their lives through accidents in their homes, which above all other places is considered a haven of safety. Just think of it; here are 55,000 deaths in 1928 which occurred, not while at work, but during periods of recreation and while at home. This story sounds horrible enough when told in terms of bare numbers. It sounds infinitely worse when told in terms of crushed and bleeding bodies and ruined hopes—in terms of suffering, want and disrupted homes. There is scarcely a person who does not know of a household that has lost a child through being killed by an automobile or who doesn't know of a widow and children who mourn the loss of a husband and father, accidentally killed.

We pay a lot of attention to the horrors of war, but right here is a peacetime war that is exacting an annual toll, in lives and suffering, greater than any war in which our nation has ever engaged. Are we doing anything about it and if we are, are we doing all that we possibly can? In other words, are we throwing our

energies into this peacetime problem with the same earnestness as we enlisted our time and service during wartime? What are we doing to prevent accidents?

The man who has safety for his subject is fortunate, for a large part of his audience, wherever he may be, is interested in his subject. That statement reminds me of a little story: A Blackhand society once wrote a wealthy man that, in failure to leave \$25,000 at a certain place and time, they would kidnap his wife.

The letter, by mistake, was delivered to a very poor man whose name was the same as the rich man's. The poor man, however, replied to the letter by saying, "I haven't any money, but I am interested in your proposition."

Today accident prevention and safety first are no longer mere phrases. In most of our industries management and employees are working hand in hand in remedying dangerous conditions and educating men, women and children to put safety above every other consideration. The rail-

roads, in 1923, started with a program which was to reduce accidents 35 per cent by 1932. This goal has already been reached, but remember that during the past eight years the railroads have spent \$324,000,000 of new capital for safety purposes. In the purely industrial field millions of dollars have been spent, also, to provide safeguards for machinery, for inter-department contests, for organized classes and all-around improvement along safety lines. In a few

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