

SNIPPETS FROM TALKS.

Calling the War-Mongers' Bluff

Leicester Webb Speaks Out Against Politicians' Hypocritical Blunderings—Disastrous Sophistry of Nations—The Beginnings of the R.C.M.P.

MR. LEICESTER WEBB (3YA).

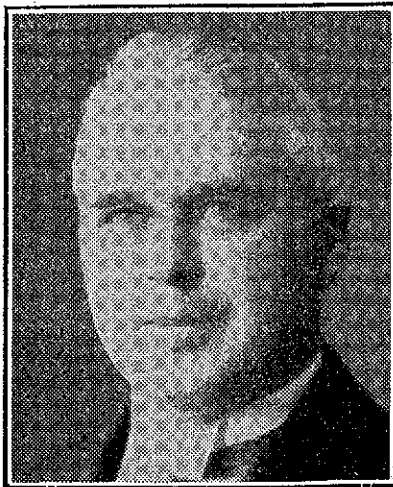
IN the last month the prospects of escaping another world war have diminished very perceptibly. First there has been the British White Paper, which has indicated quite clearly what the British Government thinks of the international outlook. Then, a few days later, came the German Government's announcement that it no longer considered itself bound by the Treaty of Versailles. There is a connection between the two events: The preamble to the arms clauses in the treaty says that Germany is being disarmed in order to make possible a general limitation of the armaments of all nations. In the eyes of the Germans, at any rate, the British White Paper means that Britain at least feels that a policy of reducing her armaments is no longer advisable in present circumstances. It has been obvious for a long time that most of the other European nations also regard disarmament as impracticable. The German Government therefore holds that, as the other nations are not holding to their part of the bargain, she is no longer obliged to hold to her part of it. There is not much use in discussing whether Germany is right or whether she is wrong. The point is that the armaments race is on, and that the peace treaties, which are the basis of order and security in Europe, have been seriously weakened.

ALL these disastrous events wouldn't be so bad if the peoples of the world would only realise that they are disastrous. The trouble is that all over the world statesmen are trying to make a virtue out of necessity. A few years ago everyone was agreed that war was as horrible as it was stupid. A few years ago everyone was agreed that disarmament was essential to the peace of the world. A few years ago it was agreed that what is called the balance of power could never bring security, and that the only hope for permanent peace lay in the League of Nations. All these propositions are true. But because the Disarmament Conference has done nothing and because there is everywhere a scramble for defensive alliances, the statesmen are saying they are not true. The first requisite of statesmanship, it seems, is to be able to show that what is happening is what ought to be happening. Thus you have the Rt. Hon. Mr. Balfour assuring the world that the increase in armaments contemplated by his government will be a notable contribution to the peace of the world. Thus you have the French Foreign Minister assuring his countrymen that an alliance with Italy and Russia will leave France so powerful that no nation will dare to attack her. Thus you have Herr Hitler assuring his countrymen that war is necessary in order to bring out the best qualities of the Nordic race. Thus you have Signor Mussolini telling Italians that war is

to men what maternity is to women. Even in this country I have heard men arguing in public that war is inevitable because the combative instinct is part of human nature.

IT is really rather amazing how this sort of nonsense gets accepted. Probably the combative instinct is part of human nature; but to argue from that that war is inevitable is merely absurd. Why, every one of us has dozens of unpleasant instincts which, if given free play, would cause all sorts of trouble. The point is that we live in a society and have acquired the art of restraining our instincts or giving them outlets in ways which are not socially harmful. Our combative instincts are aroused every day without causing bloodshed. The other day my neighbour left his wireless set going full strength for an hour or two. At one time it would have given me great satisfaction to have assaulted either him or his set with a piece of lead piping. But I didn't, and I don't seem to have suffered any very serious psychological consequences. All of us, I suppose, are naturally covetous; but we don't go about robbing, and stealing, and shoplifting. All of us are greedy, but we learn how unwise it is to overeat. Perhaps some of you will say: Yes, this is all very well, but you don't assault your neighbours or steal their property for the very good reason that if you do the police will clap you in gaol. If you think a little you will

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On the left is Mr. W. H. Cocker, of Auckland, the member of a well-known firm of barristers and solicitors. Mr. Cocker is also a member of the Auckland University College Council, and is interested in broadcasting from a cultural aspect. Mr. H. G. Livingstone (centre), is widely known in the Christchurch business world, and has been closely associated with local and sporting bodies for many years. Dr. S. Kenneth Phillips, of Auckland (right), has a very wide and sound musical knowledge and has travelled extensively in Europe.