In time of peace prepare for war” is an old saying I want to rearrange. “In time of war prepare for peace.”

We are proud that our country has done the impossible to prepare for war. We have done a job that nobody but a free people could do.

Can we gird ourselves to prepare for peace on the same grand scale? With the same determination and wholeheartedness of every citizen of our great country? It will be more difficult than preparing for war because the danger of unpreparedness for peace is not so well defined as the desire to avert the horrors of war. In these days when a total peace may be a long way off, it is time to think what we can do to keep our country on an even keel – growing, and prospering.

Here in the Middle West a great industrial giant lies sleeping. A giant that can be awakened and the postwar provides us with opportunity for such awakening. We can and must balance agriculture with industry.

Our forefathers journeyed into the Midwest against unknown and unseen dangers, carving their homes on the frontier of civilization. They were courageous, hardy fellows, who fought wild animals, Indians and border ruffians – to conquer the wilderness and produce a heritage of prosperity to hand down to our sons and their sons.

The men and women who pioneered our great Midwest knew naught of the tremendous wealth lying beneath the fertile soil; the oil and gas deposits that would one day spout forth like liquid gold; the salt mines of sufficient quantity to supply the world for generations to come; the lime rock deposits; the forests of fine timber comprising some 134 species; the 53 billion tons of coal reserves; the possibilities of our great fields of clay, and sand, and the innumerable products that lie beneath and cover the surface of the earth in the Midwest. Their prime idea was to produce food, and therein lay their failure – they became known the world over as “food producers.”

How could they know that their fields of cotton would one day furnish material for hundreds of miles of hard-surfaced roads? That the weeds they despised and fought so bitterly would one day furnish material for synthetic rubber, and other useful items?

Plastics was an unknown word, and the idea that the old family cow would one day feed and clothe us too, would have been fantastic – yet today our factories are producing a fine, wool-like material from the casein in milk! There are more than 200 products being made from corn alone; not to mention hundreds of articles being made from wheat stalks; oat hulls, and other waste farm products.
Then, too, we have water. We’ve always had it, and therefore, do not realize its importance. It is fundamental to farming and to industry.

Industry is our frontier. We have space, cheap fuel, water, mineral, and agricultural resources sufficient to support many small and great industries. We are accessible to both coasts as well as to our northern and southern borders by rail and air. We have great waterways already improved; we have a splendid network of paved highways. Now, what do we lack?

It has been charged we lack the industrial “know-how”; that the men and women of the West know nothing of industry, but can raise good cattle and corn.

Today we have proved ourselves. Our industrialists have been as quick to convert to war production as any; we have shown that we do have the “know-how.” Our industries are going full-blast in this emergency, and can continue.

Do we lack skilled labor? Before the war our young men worked on farms, and eastern industrialists claimed they knew nothing else. We here in the Middle West knew that our boys reared on farms were trained to use their hands, and could quickly and easily adapt themselves to skills of all kinds. We proved it. Now, the same industrialists tell us their experience with our farm-trained, ninety-percent American born, labor has opened their eyes and that these boys are quicker to learn industrial skills than their city-born-and-bred cousins. They claim our Middle Western labor the finest in the country.

Now, here is what we do lack in order to awaken our sleeping industrial giant and make the Middle West hum with industry. Here is the one thing which we lack to bring into use our vast reservoir of resources to make jobs for all in the postwar period. If we are going to keep pace with the rest of the world, we MUST MANUFACTURE. We must cease to send our raw materials to far distant places to be processed. We must not allow our population to be drained away merely for the lack of opportunity to work. We must bring the work here for them. We must bring the factories to the Middle West – use our own raw resources – give our people employment, in turn furnishing an ever widening market for the products we create either from the soil or from the factory.

This is the 194X frontier.

Science has proved that no man knows the potentialities within himself, nor the things which may be created as a result of his toil and the use of products nature has provided. And, so, scientific research was born to show men what they can do.

Looking ahead to the postwar period, and the desire to balance agriculture with industry in the Middle West, a group of Kansas City men have launched a movement to produce a great Midwest Research Institute to serve the whole area. Kansas City has no selfish interest – if the area grows, Kansas City will grow. The Middle West is the “Heart of America,” the area which pumps the lifeblood into the whole country through our great farmlands. We have been called the “Breadbasket of the world.” Men must eat – yes – and we are glad to be regarded as the breadbasket of the world – but that does not mean we cannot also become industrialists, and scientific research will point the way.

There is no limit to the items which our area can produce, and with the aid of research we can awaken our industrial giant, and prove to the world that the Middle West is a land of opportunity for everyone – a land where we can produce the raw materials,
and process them into articles of daily use for the peoples of the world. This is our postwar frontier. This is our opportunity.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN077

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911- ), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols’ private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.