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KEEPING PEACE IN EUROPE

SIR A. CHAMBERLAIN ON THE LEAGUE

REGIONAL AGREEMENTS

Sir Austen Chamberlain, in an address on "Collective Security" at the first meeting of the eighth session of the International Studies Conference, held at the London School of Economics yesterday, said he knew of no substitute for the League of Nations. In the matter of security he inclined to regional agreements working within the scope of the League and in accordance with the Covenant.

Details of the composition and objects of the conference were published in *The Times* yesterday.

LORD MESTON, chairman of the British Coordinating Committee for International Studies, presided, and a telegram of birthday greetings was sent to the King expressing the hope that his Majesty's reign might witness the achievement of that world peace for which he had so consistently laboured.

SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he sometimes asked himself whether since the Great War they had not lost the substance in grasping at a shadow; whether in pursuit of their ideals they had not let slip opportunities of realizing some advance; and whether, indeed, in that question, as in so many, the French proverb was not true which said *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*. At the close of that gigantic struggle, as often before in the world's history on similar occasions, the thoughts of men, horrified at their own actions and their results, sought to find some security against a repetition of the disasters which they had lived and experienced. The League of Nations was not the first effort in the world's history to find some power of sufficient physical force but still more of sufficient moral grandeur to overawe the passions of nations and to preserve the law of Europe. Other and earlier efforts sometimes never came to fruition, sometimes endured for a time, and then passed away, and, warned by their example and confronted with the present unrest, they might well ask themselves whether the great international effort embodied in the League of Nations was to have the same fate or whether it was to survive, gradually to grow in strength and authority and in time to banish the evil of war from their midst, or at least at an earlier day enormously to reduce the possibilities of a new outbreak.

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A POTENT INSTRUMENT

Whatever be the fluctuating fortunes of the League, whether at this moment it commanded more or less adherence and respect, he knew no substitute for it; he knew no other method of treating those international differences which offered the same hope; and he was convinced that the need for such an institution was so great that it would survive its infantile illnesses, its present *malaise*, and that it would gradually, very gradually, play a greater part in preserving peace and removing causes of difference. The League—who could doubt?—as it stood to-day with all its imperfections and with some failures was yet a potent instrument for the avoidance of war and the settlement of international differences.

He had ventured in the House of Commons to say that wars could be roughly divided into two classes. There were those for which he found no better name than accidental, and there were deliberate wars. By an accidental war he meant war arising without premeditation, without a desire for war on the part of anyone, out of some incident which suddenly brought passions to boiling point, which affected or was thought to affect the national honour, or out of some imbrogio into which nations had been led, not knowing what they did and from which they saw no possibility of extricating themselves without a loss of honour and of repute. In all such cases the League of Nations was an invaluable instrument for preserving peace at the present time.

What the delegates to that conference had in mind was something much greater and much more difficult to cope with—the effort by some country to impose its will upon an unwilling world. No doubt even such a country did not desire war, but it desired above all, and it meant to have, its own way, even though it be at the cost of war. Though he thought that the existence of the League of Nations and the public opinion which it created and the moral judgment which it could bring would act as a serious deterrent even to that kind of war, he did not think they would alone suffice to prevent such a war. In those cases nothing but the certainty, or at least the high probability, that deliberate aggression of that kind would mass against the aggressor forces which he could not hope to overcome would restrain him and prevent him proceeding to the ultimate resort of war. The original idea of the League of Nations was to bring all the nations of the world into one common system of mutual guarantee. He earnestly hoped that the League would maintain its world-wide character and even extend it by the re-entry of Powers which had left it or the addition of new ones; but he did not think they would find that kind of security which they needed against the danger of which he had been speaking.

IMMENSE SACRIFICES

Any guarantees which were equally binding in every war, wherever, however, on whatever subject it might arise; any obligations so widely spread; so universal and requiring potentially such immense sacrifices from the nations which gave them were, he thought, beyond the strength of humanity and called for sacrifices that the peoples of the world would not make until the whole outlook of the world was changed. He therefore inclined—as some of those who had contributed papers to the conference and as the statesmen of the world, if they might judge by the events of the last year or two, were increasingly coming to do also—towards those regional agreements which concentrated the obligations of each country more narrowly in an area in which it at once felt that no disturbance of the peace could take place without its own security being in danger. The remedy, he felt, lay in such local agreements always working within the scope of the League and in accordance with the Covenant of the League.

At this stage of the world's history and of the growth of the League of Nations more modest plans than those originally contemplated were most likely to achieve success and lay the foundations for further progress. It was on some such schemes as those that he placed his faith. His faith in the League was deep-rooted. When it was first formed he thought the League was a beautiful dream, but hardly a practical reality. A few years later it was his fate, his good fortune, to represent this country for nearly five years at the meetings of the Council and at the gatherings of the Assembly. The faith which he now expressed in the League was the result of no theory, but of his observations of its practical work and of what he saw it achieve in the years in which he participated in its deliberations. (Cheers.)

PROFESSOR LOUIS EISENMANN, chairman of the executive committee, replied on behalf of the members of the conference.

After some formal business had been transacted, PROFESSOR MAURICE BOURQUIN, general rapporteur of the study conference, made a statement on the preparatory memoranda submitted.

MR. ALLEN W. DULLES, chairman of the study meetings and leader of the United States group, gave an address on "Collective Security."

The conference was continued later in the day at the headquarters of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, St. James's Square, and will be continued there during the week.