

peace, progress and economic welfare. I believe, however, that I must not refrain here from criticising certain methods which have their origin in the dictated Peace Treaty of Versailles and which are responsible for the failure of so many endeavours that were certainly well meant.

The world is living to-day in the age of conferences. If many of these meetings were completely unsuccessful, then the reason for this disappointment is not infrequently to be found in the way in which the programme was drawn up and in the kind of goal which it was desired to achieve. Some cabinet or other feels—like all the others—that it is necessary to do something for the peace of Europe, which is considered to be menaced. But instead of communicating the general idea to all those whom it is proposed should cooperate, with the wish to learn the views of the various states and of their governments regarding the possible ways and means of dealing with and solving this question, a complete programme is drawn up between two or three chancelleries. In such cases it is frequently difficult to resist the impression that, in fixing the contents of the resolutions to be adopted, the wish is the father of the thought in mingling the possible with the impossible and thus bringing about certain failure at the cost of those invited to participate later. For, while two or three states agree upon a programme laid down in such detail, the party subsequently invited is merely informed of the contents of such a programme, with the remark that this programme is an inseparable whole, and must either be accepted or rejected in its entirety. As very good ideas may naturally be found in such a programme, the state which does not agree to the whole draft is thereby held responsible for the failure of the useful parts as well. The procedure is very reminiscent of the practice of certain film distributors who adopt the principle of always distributing good and bad films together. But this is comprehensible only as a final atavistic phenomenon which has its origin in the example of the so-called peace negotiations at Versailles.

Draw up a programme, hand it as a dictated document to a third party, and then declare that the whole is a solemnly signed treaty. With the aid of this recipe an attempt was made at that time to bring the greatest struggle in the history of the world to the beneficent conclusion so much desired by the nations which had participated in it. The results of this procedure were indeed more than tragic — not only for the conquered but also for the conquerors.

So far as Germany is concerned, I can only say the following in regard to such attempts:—

We shall take part in no further conference if we have not had our share in the drawing up of the programme from the outset. Because two or three states dish up a draft treaty, we have no wish to be the first to sample it; which is not, however, to say that we do not reserve the right to give our assent and signature subsequently to a treaty because we were not present when it was drafted or at the conferences themselves. Not at all . . . It is quite possible that in its final shape and form a treaty may satisfy us as being useful although we were present neither when it was drafted nor at the conference in which it was accepted by a number of states. We would not on that account hesitate to assent to and sign such a treaty afterwards under certain conditions, in so far as it seemed desirable and possible. The German government must reserve the right to decide for itself when this is the case.

I must, however, again emphasize the fact that to draft programmes for conferences with the heading "All or Nothing" seems to me to be the wrong method.

Such a principle I consider to be altogether impractical in political life. I believe that much more would have been achieved towards the pacification of Europe if people had been content to accept what was attainable in each instance as it arose. In recent years hardly a draft treaty has come up for discussion where one point or another was not generally accepted. Because, however, it was assumed that

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