

D25790

neighbourhood. If, however, it is proposed that they should undertake to apply automatically economic sanctions to supplement the military action of the regional group, it must be observed that such an arrangement would strengthen and perpetuate the existing one-way tendency in the application of sanctions; it would impose on the adherents to European regional pacts no obligations in Asia or America, while calling for action in the European pact areas by outside members.

As to the proposals regarding Article 11, we are in full sympathy with the shifting of emphasis to inquiry and mediation at an early stage in disputes, and with the view that unanimity cannot reasonably be required in any effort of the Council or the Assembly to effect conciliation. It would be a different matter if it were proposed to transform Article 11 into a second sanctions article, applicable before war had broken out, and brought into operation by action of the Council alone.

The process of trial and error by which the League has proceeded indicates that it is now desirable to emphasise the task of mediation and conciliation rather than of punishment; that full inquiry should be made into definite complaints of political or economic grievance; and that the duty and necessity of halting the race to rearmament emphasised by the representative of France should be faced. It is encouraging to see a growing recognition of the necessity of action to combat the economic nationalism and the endless devices of control which are strangling international trade and making political co-operation and confidence difficult to establish. Canada is wholly in sympathy with these efforts. We have no embargoes, no exchange or quota controls, and have demonstrated our readiness to negotiate for tariff reductions with any country prepared to take like action.

By working together on what is found possible to-day, the members of the League will be enabled to advance steadily, to what is found desirable to-morrow. If it tries to do too much all at once, the League may fail in essentials.

The condition of successful conciliation is the substitution of confidence and good faith for mistrust and suspicion in the mutual relations of nations. For this reason we welcome and approve the suggestion that the Covenant of the League should be detached from the Treaty of Versailles.

Having stated our position as to the revision of the Covenant, may I repeat what I said at the outset as to the consideration of this and all other matters being approached in the light of the existing European situation? There are times and seasons for all things. A certain discrimination is needed in what at the moment it may be best to discuss or to decide. One fact must be obvious, namely, that this is not a time to accentuate differences of opinion or view, but rather a time to see that nothing is permitted to stand in the way of European nations in their efforts to construct the foundations of good will and mutual confidence in their affairs. Without the restoration of confidence and good will among the nations of Europe, and particularly among the Great Powers, the League cannot possibly begin to perform its tasks. If good will and confidence go in Europe, the League will go with them; if they are re-established, there is no necessary re-adjustment in League machinery or organisation which cannot speedily be effected.

How are confidence and good will to be restored between nations of Europe, which, for the time being, appear to have suffered real impairment of both? That, as I have already said, is something which Canada believes can best be decided by the nations immediately concerned. Obviously, a necessary first step is conference. Its aim should be to bring into the comity of the other European powers the nation or nations which lie without it. That aim accomplished, the League may well consider anew how best the original purpose of universality of membership may be achieved. The purpose of its founders, and the hope of the signatories of the Covenant, was certainly not a League without the United States, Japan, Germany, Brazil or other great or lesser powers. Certainly it was not a League of Nations against any country or group of countries. Nor was it a League to promote or combat particular theories of social philosophy or economic organisation. It was to be a League to further ideals of peace and good will among all nations and between all classes. Only as member States continue to give their allegiance to this high conception of its function, can the League of Nations fulfil its mission to mankind.