

system of organised peace must rest. Lord Lytton's Commission found that the interests of China and Japan were not irreconcilable. The Chinese had done much to irritate the Japanese and had not fulfilled their treaty obligations, but they had neither made nor threatened an attack on the Japanese and the Japanese seizure of Manchuria could not be called a defensive measure. The Commission, however, suggested changes in the government of Manchuria which would have secured to Japan the internal order for which she was entitled to ask.

Throughout the discussion the Japanese, as well as certain sections of opinion in Britain, have confused the issue. The question as it concerns the world is not whether Japan has received provocation from China, but whether Japan is justified in settling the whole issue by her own force and defying League intervention. Lord Lytton has himself again and again insisted upon this distortion of the point at issue. He says of the Japanese attitude:

Throughout the discussions which have taken place at Geneva, the arguments used by the representatives of Japan have been irrelevant to the issue which was under discussion. The Japanese speeches have all dwelt upon the chaotic condition of China, upon the provocative nature of the anti-foreign propaganda of the Chinese Government, or of the faults of the Chinese administration in Manchuria; but beyond the bare assertion that everything that Japan has said is true and everything that Japan has done is right, there has been no attempt to answer the charge that whatever the grievances of Japan might have been they did not justify the occupation by force of Chinese territory. That is why the efforts to arrive at an agreed basis for the starting point of the negotiations were doomed to failure from the outset. The parties were never discussing the same issue.

Japan persists in her claim to be arbiter in her own quarrel and remains in occupation of the Chinese provinces in defiance of the unanimous decision of the League.

Lord Lytton's Commission stated in its Report:

The interests of peace are the same the world over. Any loss of confidence in the application of the principles of the Covenant and of the Pact of Paris in any part of the world diminishes the value and efficacy of those principles everywhere.

Failure to effect a settlement of the Far Eastern dispute and acquiescence in a situation which has been brought about by force would undoubtedly be a weakening of the Covenant and would have grave consequences in Europe where the difficulties of the League would be greatly increased. The situation in the Far East has already reacted unfavourably on the Disarmament Conference.

The Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union is of opinion that, when the aid of the League is again invoked by China, the League should take action to bring to an end the present position in the Far East, and that the British Government should support such action and be prepared with a definite policy for that emergency.

It is therefore suggested that the League of Nations Union should, on all its platforms and in its publications, insist upon:

- (1) The moral obligation of every State Member of the League to preserve Chinese territory against external aggression; and
- (2) The grave consequences of allowing Japanese troops to remain in occupation of Chinese territory.