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tion of the mentalities of different lands, and a more realistic understanding of the difficulties and differences that must be faced and overcome. In bringing together periodically the representatives of half a hundred States, the League builds up barriers against war by developing a spirit of conciliation, an acceptance of publicity in international affairs, a habit of co-operation to common ends, and a permanently available machinery for the adjustment of differences, and for the cultivation of an informed world opinion. If the League did not exist, some such world organisation would have to be invented. But there is to-day also a widespread conviction, born of experience, that at this stage in the evolution of the League emphasis should be placed upon conciliation rather than upon coercion. There is a general unwillingness of peoples to incur obligations which they realise they may not be able in time of crisis to fulfil, obligations to use force, and to use it at any place, any time, in circumstances unforeseen, and in disputes over whose origin or whose development they have had little or no control. This difficulty of automatic intervention increases rather than decreases when conflicts tend to become struggles between classes, between economic systems, between social philosophies and, in some instances, between religious faiths, as well as between States. Moreover, participation in civil conflict abroad brings the hazard of strain and conflict at home.

#### Adherence to the Covenant

Canada comes to the League of Nations to-day with a desire to reaffirm her adherence to the fundamental principles of the Covenant. The preservation of peace by the progressive organisation of international co-operation within a collective system has been championed in equal measure by members of all political parties in Canada. Our attachment to this ideal is as strong to-day as it was at the inception of the League. At the same time, there is general concurrence in the view which has been expressed by leaders of all political parties since the beginning of the League, that automatic commitment to the application of force is not a practical policy.

Successive Canadian Governments have opposed the view that the League's central purpose should be to guarantee the territorial *status quo* and to rely upon force for the maintenance of peace. Canadian public men, irrespective of party, opposed or sought to remove the *status quo* guarantees of Article X. The Canadian Government in 1925 rejected the Protocol of Geneva because of "its rigid provisions for the application of economic and military sanctions in practically every future war."

In responding to the invitation of the United States to become a signatory of the Briand-Kellogg Pact—the Pact of Paris as it is also known—the Canadian Government, in view of the discussion as to the bearing of the Pact upon the Covenant of the League, made the following statement in 1928:—

"It is true that the Covenant also contemplates the application of sanctions in the event of a member State going to war, in so doing it has broken the pledges of the Covenant to seek a peaceful solution of disputes. Canada has always opposed any interpretation of the Covenant which would involve the application of these sanctions automatically or by the decision of other States. It was on the initiative of Canada that the Fourth Assembly, with a single negative vote, accepted the interpretative resolution to which the Secretary of State of the United States recently referred, indicating that it is for the constitutional authorities of each State to determine in what degree it is bound to assure the execution of the obligations of this article by employment of its military forces.

"The question of sanctions has received further consideration by later Assemblies. It is plain that the full realisation of the ideal of joint economic or military pressure upon an outlaw power, upon which some of the founders of the League set great store, will require either an approach to the universality of the League contemplated when the Covenant was being drawn, or an adjustment of the old rules of neutrality to meet the new conditions of co-operative defence."

The Canadian House of Commons by unanimous resolution has made the adoption of undertakings to apply either military or economic sanctions subject to the approval of Parliament.

What I have said and quoted does not mean that in no circumstances would the Canadian people be prepared to share in action against an aggressor; there have been no absolute commitments either for or against participation in war or other forms of force. It does mean that any decision on the part of Canada to participate in war will have to be taken by the Parliament or people of Canada in the light of all existing

circumstances; circumstances of the day as they exist in Canada, as well as in the areas involved.

#### Strengthening the League's Shaken Authority

The task of the present Assembly has been declared to be an inquiry into the means of "strengthening the authority of the League of Nations by adapting the application of the principles of the Covenant to the lessons of experience."

We believe that the only way to strengthen the League's shaken authority is to take heed of that experience, to make the policies of the League conform to realities, to the conditions and attitudes of mind that exist in fact in the world of to-day, without losing sight of the possibility of modifying those policies as facts and national attitude change in the future.

The Covenant as originally drafted provided alternatively for peace by conciliation and peace by collective coercion. In its original conception, the Covenant was predicated upon the universal acceptance of its provisions. Without this assumption of universality, it is doubtful if peace by collective coercion would have found a place within its articles. Experience has revealed the difficulty of applying sanctions within a League of Nations where the condition of practical universality is lacking.

The universal acceptance of the principles of the Covenant must be the constant aim of those who hope for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. It is necessary to remember, however, that universality is not to be attained in a single stride, and that its achievement will only be rendered possible as the utility of the preventive functions of the League is confirmed by experience and supported by the quickened conscience of humanity.

The coercive and punitive provisions of the Covenant have operated in the past as a deterrent to the kind of collaboration which must serve as an intermediate stage to a League of Nations which will be universal. By emphasising mediation and conciliation aspects of the Covenant, we can help to transform the collective system from a hope into a reality. Every vacant seat in this Assembly is a broken link in the chain of collective security.

#### Formal Amendment Neither Possible Nor Necessary

The Canadian Government does not believe that formal amendment of the Covenant now is either possible or necessary. The powers and duties of the League develop by usage and experience as well as by explicit amendment. What its members will and will not do can be read more clearly from what they have done and not done than from the text of the Covenant. What is now called for is to register in the light of actual facts the position which has developed during 16 years of League history by the interpretations given and the action taken or not taken as occasion arose.

It is a fact, as has been indicated by representatives of the Scandinavian countries and other members of the League, that many provisions of the Covenant have not been observed, or have been applied unequally or ineffectively. The pledges of reduction of armaments in Article 8 have not been honoured. The provisions for the revision of treaties "which have become inapplicable," contained in Article 19, and which were in form and fact an essential complement to the provisions of Article 10 for the maintenance of the territorial *status quo*, have not yet been applied. The sanctions provision of Article 16 were tacitly recognised at an early stage as unworkable in their entirety, and they were modified by the Assembly resolutions of 1921. Modified, or unmodified, sanctions against an aggressor have never been tried when the conflict took place in Asia or in America. Applied once in an Afro-European conflict, they failed and were abandoned because of general unwillingness under the conditions of the day to press force to the point of war.

Proposals have been made for regional agreements to ensure immediate and definite military assistance against an aggressor. These proposals show a closer approach to reality by linking the obligation with a definite contingency and a direct interest. The danger that such agreements might develop in practice into old-fashioned military alliances will doubtless be given careful consideration. It is essential to recognise that the areas in which regional agreements could be worked out are under present conditions restricted, almost wholly, to parts of Europe. League members in other parts of the world where this device is impracticable cannot reasonably object to the formation of such agreements by countries which consider them essential to their own security and the stability of their

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