

*Norman Mackenzie*

And that brings me to my final point: Canadian responsibility for the collective system. The pre-war history of the relations of nations was one of irresponsible individualism, in which every nation looked after its own interests alone and the devil took the weak and the small. The results of that method were exemplified by the Great War, with its appalling losses and dislocations. The collective system is a substitute for it, and presupposes a measure of co-operation, or of willingness to submit to international control, probably both. Its success, in so far as it prevents wars and brings some guarantee of security and stability, is of importance to all countries, and to all individuals, but particularly to the smaller nations, for it alone offers them freedom from the burden of armaments, from the fears of invasion, and some hope for the future. Canada, because of the British Navy and the Monroe Doctrine, is not likely to be invaded-- unless those two defences clash; but Canada is a small nation and vitally interested in the maintenance of peace in the world; and the failure of the collective system now almost inevitably spells war in the not distant future, in which, as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, she will be actively engaged, or from the economic consequences of which, as a member of the family of nations, she will suffer.

Then what is my own opinion of the attitude and action of the Canadian government? It is extremely difficult to form an opinion of a government that, publicly at least, has said nothing and done nothing. It would be very simple for me, a private citizen without any of the responsibilities of office, to criticize the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and to suggest to him what a wise man would do in Utopia. But I do not propose to do that. I suggest, however, that Canada was not in a position, and is not in a position, to do anything about the matter alone. But I wish that over a year ago Mr. Bennett had copied the example of Mr. Meighen, and had brought very forcibly to Sir John Simon's attention the dangers to Anglo-American relations of the trouble in the Far East, and the menace to the whole collective system in that conflict. Unfortunately, I am afraid that Mr. Bennett has been so absorbed in our own economic difficulties that he has had little time to advise Sir John Simon regarding this matter, or even to give it the attention, from a purely Canadian point of view, that it deserves. Unfortunately too, I am by no means sure that Sir John Simon and certain of the members of the government that he represents, are whole-hearted admirers and supporters of law, order and justice in international affairs as represented by the League. For if they were, I feel sure that Great Britain and the United States could have agreed upon some policy in common, in regard to Manchuria, that would have won the support of the bulk of the League Members, and would have avoided many of the difficulties that now face the world. For I believe that the Japanese are in Manchuria to stay - until the Chinese push them out. I believe further that this fact is certain to shake the confidence of any nation in the security offered by the League. This in turn indicates a return to pre-war individualism and irresponsibility, and that means war.

In conclusion, may I quote briefly from the very interesting speech of Mr. Cahan, delivered a short time ago before the special Assembly of the League; and from the editorial columns of the Montreal "Star" of December 22nd, which reported his speech:-