

But after a war from which they were determined they should escape, in which for three years they declined to participate, the course of which showed that no country could remain neutral without completely forgetting or submerging every principle of honour, a war which proved that another on the same scale would make neutrality impossible for any considerable length of time, and which showed that the world had become a unit and the interests of all nations were intertwined, how they could feel that the peace and welfare of that unit did not concern themselves, passes the comprehension of thoughtful people in all other countries. But such was their decision, and from the consequences of that decision we have not been far removed in the whole course of the succeeding fourteen years.

Had all the nations assembled at Paris after the war stood by the great creation of the Peace Conference, there would not have been, in my opinion, any resignations in the year 1933, and no defiance of that universal power would have long survived. But we have to take things as they are. I believe that if there were another conflict, with the experience that would inevitably be the lot of the United States as of all other parts of the world, the American people would not long hesitate after the close of the conflict to signify their eagerness to join the League of Nations. Should there be another struggle, in which perhaps they would be participants for the whole period rather than for one-third of it, there would likely be at its end no reluctance on the part of the United States in joining the other powers, in realizing that nations are as brothers, and in doing their part to prevent the recurrence of still another world calamity. Believing that, and knowing that there is at least some value in the League as it now stands, in its reduced and one might even say its emaciated form, and confidently hoping that with the passage of time and the experience that comes with time those nations who have retired from the circle of the League will return and that those who have not yet entered will see its usefulness and become members, I feel that we cannot do better than stand by to the last, remaining faithful and steadily doing our full part in support of the organization. Let us by our example illustrate what the League can become, not only by contributing to its upkeep, but also, if it becomes necessary to do so in order that the collective will of all the nations within its fold may prevail, by standing ready to draw the sword on behalf of that collective will.

The whole question is whether the future is to belong to reason and wisdom or to be given over to profligacy, lunacy and ruin because of some sluggish, poisonous obstinacy of human nature. For myself I hope for and believe in the brighter destiny, as I am sure everyone in this House does. We believe that sooner or later there will come a time when the League of Nations will be the arbiter of the world. Man learns from experience. Often it seems that he can learn only through suffering, but somehow or other he always learns in the end. And he will learn in this sphere of international relations. Before he fully applies the lesson there may be an interval, and it may be a tragic interval of perversity, of destruction, of human immolation. But if we take the long view we can see that the future will be under warmer and brighter skies. The time is coming when there will be universal allegiance to the League as the only possible institution which can stand between man and international anarchy. Let us hope that time will soon come. Let us hope that the allegiance which ultimately all nations will give to the League will be accorded under the sunshine of reason and in the hour of triumphant peace, and that these pledges of fidelity will not wait to be spoken in the black perdition that follows an overwhelming catastrophe, by the gasping breath of a condemned and stricken generation.

The time is coming when peoples will rejoice in the measure of their devotion, when they will be glad that through dark and discouraging years they stood true and never wavered. The time is coming when even on this continent the tragic drama of 1920 will be reviewed and redeemed, when the name of Woodrow Wilson will come back into its own, when it will be written large across the pages of history, above the names of men who made nations and saved them, because it will be recognized that he at least tried even unto death to do something greater still. The time is coming when his name will shine resplendent over this hemisphere, not because of the triumphs which from time to time crowned his life, but because of the momentous mission, the glorious endeavour in which, in his last crowded and toiling days he failed.

For us the journey may be long and arduous. But I hope that at its end it will be possible to say of Canada that throughout its whole weary length we kept the faith.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Tanner, the debate was adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until to-morrow at 3 p.m.

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