

country. We assume our responsibilities direct as the Dominion of Canada and not through our association with Great Britain or the Empire. As to our position in the event of war, may I quote the opinion of Lord Davies, who, I am given to understand, was one of the active founders of the League. Writing in 1931 as to the position of the Dominions in case of war, he has this, in part, to say:

As members of the League, they are, of course, free to choose for themselves. . . . Whatever attitude they may choose to adopt, has, in the present circumstances, little bearing upon the choice of Great Britain. . . . The distance which separates them from the Mother Country precludes them from rendering assistance in the event of a sudden attack, however willing they may be to aid in her defence. Before they arrived on the scene half the population of Britain might have perished of famine, gas and disease. This result would have been produced by the employment of modern weapons. The times have changed and adaption is the secret of existence. The ties of nationality, race and sentiment are precious heritages, but in the present necessity they are powerless to mould the destiny of nations or individuals. Thus the self-governing Dominions will decide the issue for themselves.

Lord Davies' opinion recognizes our new national status to which I have referred. This being a clear statement of our position as a member of the League, who will say that we should not now discuss our responsibilities?

May I say in answer to those ultra-loyalists who are annoyed by this motion, that discussions as to Great Britain's withdrawing from the League are not tabooed in England, and that a section of the British press is very active in that regard. There are those in England who advocate that Britain should not only withdraw from the League, but keep out of the next European war and leave it to the Continental nations to fight it out among themselves.

What would those Canadians who think we should not debate the League do about our participation in the next war? Leave it to Downing Street to decide for us? That policy was exploded on this Continent over a century ago.

Britain's foreign policy does not offer much encouragement. Since the formation of the League of Nations fifteen years ago, her policy as a whole has been very indefinite. At the moment, if we may credit the press reports, Britain is negotiating, not through the League, but direct with France, on the old pre-war basis of coalition. There are several other outstanding instances of Britain's failure to make use of the League. Before the War Europe was a continent of coalitions: so it is to-day.

Hon. Mr. McRAE.

If Great Britain, by secret treaty or otherwise should guarantee security to France, or make a coalition with any other continental country or group, and a war should come about in which Britain must participate, have we no voice as to what Canada should do about it? Many of our citizens think we must fight if Britain is at war. If that is so, should we not have something to say, at the time they are being negotiated, about the treaties, coalitions, or agreements which obligate us to fight? Yet where is the Canadian to-day who would advocate that Canada should sign any treaty or join any coalition which promises to involve us in a European war? I do not believe that the Canadian people will give any Government a blank cheque for war. For my part I now hold the opinion, with which I am sure that at least one member of this House will agree, that before Canada enters into any war, other than for home defence, the approval of the Canadian people must be obtained. The right honourable the leader of this House (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen), in his well-known Hamilton speech, first gave utterance to this principle. He was eight years ahead of the country. I did not agree with him at that time, but now I am one of those who have caught up with him. Is there any honourable senator who, speaking on this motion, will say Canada should be committed to a foreign war without the voice of the people being heard? I do not think that any one of us will say that Canada should go to war if the majority of our citizens say no.

I know the objection has been raised to a referendum on war that it would take too long to ascertain the will of the people and that much valuable time would be lost. I hold that in these days of rapid communication, and with the aid of the provinces, a referendum could be submitted and a decision arrived at within three weeks. During this time initial war preparations could be put under way if the Government so desired.

In any event we are 3,500 miles away from the European theatre of war, and, as Lord Davies points out, the loss of three weeks' time would make little difference. This is particularly true now as it is generally recognized that the first great effort in the next war, with the use of the aeroplane, will be confined to gas bombs, germ bombs and similar devilish and destructive instruments and inventions of war designed to exterminate first the civil population. These efforts will have spent themselves in the first week of the war, and our participation two or three months later, at the earliest, would quite

likely assume the form of the still more gruesome task of restoration.

If the referendum, as suggested, is to be our national policy with respect to war, what could be more disloyal to Great Britain than our failure to make that fact clear to her at this time? Why should we not make it clear before she has given her assurances, made her treaties and assumed her obligations? We must not wait until war is upon her, and then run out. Let those who depreciate this discussion on the League of Nations keep this fact in mind. I do not believe in the policy of wait and see what will happen. It has been truly said that "the policy of drift may place Canada at the mercy of accidents beyond her control." For these reasons I advocate that Canada should withdraw from the League now, when we can do so with honour.

As to the fairness of a referendum, may I assure those who fear the war sentiment might not be fully recorded, that a referendum taken under the excitement of war, with the waving of the flag, the cry of loyalty and the desire of youth for adventure, would at least muster for the war party all the strength they can ever hope for.

Honourable senators, I trust I have shown ample grounds to justify me in bringing in this motion at the present time, and the need for the discussion which I anticipate will ensue.

Fifteen years ago the League of Nations was launched on the world with the active membership support of more than fifty nations, and the prayers of the war-weary people throughout the universe. The possibilities of the League were immense. There was to be no more war. The League was regarded as the greatest effort for peace that the world had ever known. Had it accomplished its objective the millennium would now be with us.

After all these years let us see where the League stands to-day. Two great nations, Germany and Japan, have withdrawn. Russia was never a member. More than a dozen countries are not paying their dues, and this, I submit, should be equivalent to withdrawal. It is said that as late as September of last year only fifty-five per cent of the dues were being paid and that the arrears were then £891,127, or over four and a half million dollars. The report of the League for 1932 shows arrears at the end of 1932 of 24,000,000 Swiss gold francs, a sum equal to \$4,800,000, or \$950,000. These are all round figures.

25-1934-14

Referring to the subject of dues, the Right Hon. W. Ormsby Gore, as quoted in International Affairs, London, had this to say.

Quite apart from the questionable morality of not paying your club subscription, the failure to pay and the consequent uncertainty and precarious character of the League revenue have resulted in a very bad system of League budgeting. As experience shows that some countries do not pay, it is necessary, in order to make the League income and expenditure balance, to over-estimate the coming expenditure by the amount of expected defections. The result of this is twofold. First, the "estimates" voted by the Assembly are faked estimates throughout; every item is more or less "over-estimated." Secondly, as contributions are assessed on the basis of these faked estimates, those countries that do pay promptly in fact pay more than their allotted share of the actual expenditure. There has thus grown up a system of hiding and subterfuge which is not a credit to the League, and is definitely unfair to France and ourselves, who do pay up promptly.

Mr. Ormsby Gore might have included Canada with Britain and France, as I presume we pay promptly all that is asked from us by the League.

In connection with League dues I might say that the annual expenditure of the League as budgeted for 1932 was 33,000,000 Swiss francs, or nearly \$7,000,000. Our annual contribution, beginning with \$64,000 for the first year, has increased to \$278,000 for the year 1932-33. Our total contribution in the fifteen years we have maintained our membership in the League is somewhat over two and a half million dollars.

It is interesting to note that our dues as a member of the League are exactly one-third of the dues paid by Great Britain; forty-five per cent of dues paid by either Germany or France, each paying the same amount, and fifty-eight per cent of the dues of Italy or Japan, who are assessed equally. So it would appear that for a nation of only ten million people we are paying our full share. I might mention that the withdrawal of Germany and Japan, who have heretofore, by way of dues, been contributing thirteen and one-half per cent of the League's expenditure, is going to result in a corresponding increase in the dues which Canada will be called upon to pay as a continuing member of the League. An attempt to reconcile our annual cash payments with our percentage allotment and the budget for the year lends support to the Right Hon. Ormsby Gore's criticism.

The League up to the end of 1932 has spent more than \$50,000,000, and at the present time is spending, according to the budget, 33,000,000 Swiss francs, or slightly in excess of