

able questions, and those that are political. The justiciable questions arise in the interpretation of treaties and international law, and are questions which undoubtedly must be brought before a judicial tribunal. We all agreed to recognize the Court of International Justice in 1920, but no nation at that time bound itself compulsorily to submit to that Court all its differences touching the interpretation of treaties or international law. Each nation recognized the Court, contributed to its maintenance, and accepted the idea of going before the Court with a special case, by special understanding with another country; but the statute respecting the Court included a provision, clause 36, which declared that the nations could, either when they joined the Court or later on, agree to submit to it compulsorily all difficulties coming within the class of justiciable questions. The great powers hesitated to bind themselves, though the smaller nations were eager to do so. The small nations had but their right to assert, while the great nations could rely upon their might. The problem was to have the great nations come down to the level of the small nations, just as in the case of a great corporation and a humble individual appearing on an equal footing before a court of justice. It took some time for them to agree to submit to the Hague Tribunal all questions of a justiciable nature that might arise. Germany, last year, was the first to do so: being disarmed, it stood fairly on a plane with the small nations, and was desirous of showing that it intended not to arm, but to rely upon justice. For four years we had been awaiting the action of the great nations, and I am happy to say that at the last session of the Assembly, in September, Great Britain led the great nations in declaring its adherence to that clause; then France and Italy followed, and I think Japan also. But I desire to say that, as Great Britain recognized, it did not lead the Empire in this movement. It was Canada, the oldest Dominion in the British Commonwealth, that took the lead. The newspapers in Europe gave credit to Canada for having in February last, during the last session of Parliament, declared that it intended to sign the clause, and I may say that I heard representatives of Great Britain, journalists among them, commend Canada for having made that official statement, because it helped to clarify the situation in Great Britain. Up to that moment there was an impression that Great Britain hesitated to sign the clause on account of the unwillingness of some of the nations to do

so, but when Canada declared that it was desirous of signing there was a movement in Great Britain in favour of accepting a like obligation.

I may add that in the year one event stands out as promising greater peace in Europe; it is the settlement of the war debts at the Hague Conference in December and January last. This settlement will be a powerful factor for peace, because it removes very many causes of friction, which was felt not only in the Assembly but more especially in the Council of the League. For the last five or six years there have been constant recriminations and discussions between Hungary and Rumania as to the rights of Hungarian optants in Transylvania. There has also been considerable friction between Poland and Germany. There were difficulties in the Balkans between Bulgaria and the other members of the League in that region. There were also difficulties in Austria. Many of those differences arose from the unsettled conditions relating to the war debts, which materially affected the budgets of those various countries. There has been a general clearing up of those differences, and I believe that the slackening of tension will be felt in Geneva. I may say that in January last, for the first time, I noticed considerable improvement in the relations between Poland and Germany—a degree of cordiality which had hitherto been lacking.

There remains to be settled the great question of disarmament, now being discussed in London. Strenuous efforts are being made to reach an agreement for some reduction in naval armaments. I shall not dwell on this matter. I may say that the main question is one of security and there is involved to a certain degree the factor of prestige. Nations have signed the Briand-Kellogg Pact, binding themselves to abandon war as an instrument of national policy, but they feel that the moment has not yet come when they can dispense with their means of defence. One needs to travel but little in Europe to realize what prestige means. Some of the countries that are represented at the present conference in London claim that they require certain tonnage, which I am sure they do not intend to build up to, but which would mean for them a certain status in the community of nations. I well recall some words that fell from the lips of M. Briand when, in 1921, he returned to France from the Washington Conference somewhat dissatisfied with the apportionment of naval tonnage to his country. A journalist asked him, as he was boarding his ship in New York: "Has not a certain coolness developed between those two

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