

gested that we should send an official observer. That procedure, also, I may point out, is not feasible under the existing practice of the union. Some question as to official observers arose at the Montevideo conference in 1933, and the matter was later considered by the governing board. The board, after referring to the fact that since the Havana conference of 1928 both plenary and committee sessions have been open to the general public, concluded that "there seems to be no reason for establishing a category of 'official observers'."

These are, however, somewhat technical considerations. It would be possible to propose or have a friendly member propose that the necessary adjustments should be made in the constitution and procedure of the union to make our membership possible. Public opinion in favour of some such course has undoubtedly increased in recent years. I do not, however, consider that it has yet become sufficiently widespread, or sufficiently informed and matured, to warrant immediate steps in that direction. It is a possibility which should be given consideration in the future, along with other means, trade and governmental, of bringing about closer relationships between our country and these countries which are destined to play an increasingly significant part in the world's affairs.

Another important factor in determining Canada's attitude and policies is our increasing interest in the affairs of Europe. Europe has become a part of the average man's life and thinking in a way that was never true before, except during the great war, and even then in more specialized ways. The old continent has presented in recent years a dramatic and absorbing, if, withal, at times, a terrifying spectacle, with great issues as the theme. New forces, or old passions in new clothing have been driving whole peoples onward to unknown ends, with striking figures personifying their desires. War and the marching of troops, social revolution and religious conflict, have held our attention. Controversies have not been confined to council chambers or diplomatic congresses; challenges are hurled across frontiers in all men's sight and hearing. Increased press services, the films of foreign happenings, the radio and radio commentators, the books of intimate confessions written by a score of European correspondents, have brought the drama to new audiences of millions. In many cases the impact has been too strong. The flaming headline, the daily sensation, the voices and pictures from the scene of conflict, the commentators' dramatization have been too much for some people. It is perhaps fortunate that television has not yet come into popular use.

Spectators frequently do not remain wholly spectators. Their interest is engaged. They may take sides, more or less informed: human sympathies, racial sympathies, religious sympathies, class sympathies, political creeds, apprehensions of the results for their own country, may carry them into opposition or advocacy. It is not an idealistic and detached interest such as the League of Nations awakened in its prime; it is a more passionate interest, the interest of people moved to fear or to hate. And inevitably persons who feel deeply, desire to have their own country's policy directed to support or oppose one or other of these contending forces. This explains how it is in our own country there have been some who wanted support for Madrid, others for Burgos; why one defends Stalin, another Trotsky—and overwhelming numbers condemn them both; why occasionally voices are heard in defence of fascism, while many urge that we take up arms on behalf of all democratic countries; and why we have appeals to aid this oppressed religious group, or that struggling racial minority. In many cases these demands are largely an emotional release, but in so far as they do not cancel out, they constitute a force for intervention in European affairs.

I have referred to the difference between the present interest in Europe and the interest which, in earlier years, centered in the League of Nations. For a good many years we on this side of the Atlantic looked at Europe through the window of Geneva. When we thought of its problems and controversies, most of us took it for granted they would be settled by the machinery of the league and on league principles. It was assumed by the supporters of collective security through collective coercion, that if force were needed the force at the league's command would be overwhelming. The case for league action was further simplified by the abstract and general manner in which the contingency was presented; it was no particular issue with its indefinite tones, but an abstract issue, in blacks and whites, between an aggressor and his victim. Naturally everyone was against the "aggressor." But when the theory came to the testing, the league was found to lack the universality that had been assumed, and the specific disputes presented difficulties of divided national interest, or hesitation to risk war, that had not arisen in the hypothetical case of an abstract aggressor.

In the momentous incidents of the past year, the league has played little part. The assembly was in session at the height of the September crisis, but no one in Geneva or elsewhere thought of it as the effective instru-