

Halifax's gilt-edged "niceness." What with tributes to the Great Deceased and bouquets to each other and commendatory remarks on the good work accomplished, the whole thing reminded one of speech day at school. In front of me the Argentine Ambassador and his pretty daughter applauded with polite enthusiasm. There were only two cracks in the surface — one was when Masaryk, the Czech Foreign Minister, said at the close of his speech, "Let us for God's sake hear less talk of the next world war." And the other (for me at least) was when Stettinius asked us to stand "in silent memory of the dead in this war whose sacrifice had made this Conference possible." I suppose it had to be said — it sounded as if we were thanking Lady Bountiful for lending her garden "without which this bazaar would not have been possible." As a matter of fact I did think of some of the dead — of Victor Gordon-Ives, who wanted to go on living and to enjoy country-house culture, collect beautiful things and make jokes with his friends — of John Rowley and Gavin Rainnie and the other Canadians whose prompt reaction would have been "Balls to you, brother!" Still, I suppose it had to be said, but not by Stettinius in the San Francisco Opera House on a gala evening to the polite applause of the Argentine Ambassador. □

The defensible United Nations

by Stephen Lewis

I like the United Nations. I am a shameless apologist for this lovely and byzantine organization. I think it is a first-rate international institution and I do not much care for the gratuitous detractors. There are problems, there are imperfections, there are deficiencies in the United Nations system. But I have often asked myself, as I view it in a novice's way, could it be otherwise after forty years?

We are often worried by the capacity of the superpowers — indeed, all of the Permanent Members of the Security Council — to thumb their noses with impunity at decisions which are taken at the United Nations. That happens from time to time in a way which is disconcerting, unnerving, occasionally frustrating. We know of the proliferation of nation-states, and the way this has engendered within the arena of the General Assembly an excess of rhetorical spleen, some aggressive posturing and occasional

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