

believe it is doing justice to either party for any one of us to express a decided opinion as to the merits of the case now under review by a commission headed by the British statesman Earl Lytton. This commission is attempting to determine all the circumstances antecedent to the recent outbreak, including the terms of the treaty between China and Japan and the methods on the one hand, by which it is contended provocation was given and, on the other, by which defence of national rights was set up. I am not prepared to express an opinion with respect to it. It may well be that there is much more than can be readily seen in a matter of this kind, involving as it does, treaties, the consideration of local conditions, and all the surrounding circumstances. So little were the parties, removed, as they were in Geneva, from the sphere of activities, able to pass upon it that they set up a commission to make an investigation on the ground. One Canadian, a gentleman with much experience in connection with railways, was attached to the commission at the instance of Sir Eric Drummond, the secretary general of the league. That commission is now carrying on its duties. I for one, despite what the hon. gentleman has just said—in my opinion this indicates the conclusions arrived at by one school of thought as distinguished from another—am not prepared to express any settled conviction upon the question except this: Any recourse to arms involving bloodshed is, in my opinion, at variance with the terms of the provisions of the covenant of the league as well as of the pact of Paris.

When I am asked, as each one of us is asked, why this country did not take a more leading part in the matter, I think all I have to do is to refer to the terms of the league itself, to examine the sanctions which are provided and to ask myself this question: Would you in a position of responsibility accept what is involved in endeavouring to put these sanctions into force against either China or Japan? For my own part, I confess I would not. I would be content to pursue the course which I believe commends itself to the thoughtful statesmen of the world who have had wide experience, where I have had none. Happily the representatives of this dominion, being in Geneva at the time in connection with another matter, were able to attend these meetings. I believe that the extracts which I have just read from the statements made on March 8 last by the Right Hon. Sir George Perley to the assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva represent the convictions, the hopes and

[Mr. Bennett.]

aspirations of the Canadian people with respect to the success of the great experiment embodied in the setting up of the League of Nations.

I fear at times when I contemplate the work of the league that there is great danger of its efforts failing, not because it has not striven earnestly but because there is sometimes on the part of critical persons an inclination to expect it to be able to produce the millennium just as the magician produces a rabbit out of a hat. There is no such power given to any sons of man, whether they be the League of Nations or any other league in the world. These representatives, the governors and the executive council, I believe have striven as earnestly as men ever have striven in the history of Christendom to do a constructive work for the preservation of the world's peace. I always get back to this thought—and it has the effect of making me think well rather than ill of the work this organization is accomplishing: what would have happened had we not had this world organization to which to appeal to create a public opinion, limited to no one country but extended to all, favourable to the outlawry of war, and to prevent aggression by one nation against another, no matter how great might be the provocation?

Item agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS

To provide for expenses in connection with the Imperial economic conference, \$250,000.

Mr. IRVINE: Mr. Chairman, I had hoped that I would have had the opportunity of offering some extended observations on the approaching economic conference, but obviously at this time of night, when we are attempting to finish the business of the committee before eleven o'clock, it will be impossible for me even to attempt to cover the ground I had intended to cover. However, when this subject was last before the house for discussion an opportunity did not offer to any hon. member in this corner of the house to express an opinion on the matter, so perhaps I may take a few moments, even at this late hour, to say that we in this corner have hopes of some results from the Imperial economic conference. We realize that the people of Canada have great expectations of this conference; that, in fact, the hope of the nation is centred upon it, and that even if it were as successful as we hope it will be, there is bound to be considerable disappointment, for it is scarcely probable that there will emerge immediately any