

As for the other main function of the League, Article XIX needs to be so strengthened as to make it clear that any State member of the League should have a right to ask the Assembly to appoint a commission of inquiry into any specified international conditions which either render a treaty obsolete and incapable or might endanger peace."

Mr. Pethwick Lawrence, leading for the Labour Party, was also insistent that British foreign policy should be based on a defence of "public right."

Sir Austen Chamberlain, on the other hand, favoured a policy of limiting the commitments of Great Britain to the "defence of the independence of the Low Countries, Belgium, Holland, and of France."

"I agree," he continued, "that to say that we will fight then, and only then, in those cases, would be to license war everywhere throughout the rest of the world. That is a thing which we have not the right to do, but I think we have, outside these specified limits in which we are prepared to use our whole force, the right to reserve our right of judging each case on its merits and to make our efforts proportionate to our capacity and our interests, and to what other people are doing, to what those who are the immediate victims are doing, and have prepared for, having regard to the dangers which are involved."

Has not Sir Austen yet realised that the uncertainty involved in his policy is almost as dangerous as a blank refusal to accept any commitments east of the Rhine? In the latter case, European countries would at least know where they stood and could organise their security accordingly.

Sir Austen then went on to point out the contradiction between Articles X and XIX of the Covenant and to make a very valuable contribution to the discussion of League reform. He said:

"I submit that the guarantee, or what would be the guarantee under Article X, ought to be subject to acceptance of any advice tendered under Article XIX, and that other member of the League cannot be held bound to continue to support a belligerent if that belligerent refuses to accept a settlement which in all the circumstances of the case they think equitable, or the best that can be obtained."

Mr. Mander's contribution was probably the most constructive in the debate.

"We must," he said, "get those who will loyally and willingly co-operate in the collective system. At present the number is very small—Great Britain, France and Belgium—with a definite binding Staff arrangement of a collective kind such as I should like to see developed on a very wide scale; because unless there are Staff arrangements ready to be put into force automatically, and agreed on beforehand, it is of very little use. We ought to extend those Staff conversations—if possible to Germany, by all means, and certainly to Russia.

"It has been rightly said that to preserve the *status quo* is not enough and that some machinery must be devised for making Article XIX of the Covenant function. There must be some method of peaceful change. The countries will all have to accept the idea of third-party judgment in any dispute that may arise among them. We ought to try to set up something in the nature of a tribunal in equity."

Replying to the debate, Mr. Eden was rather more specific on the Government's attitude towards League reform.

"We do not intend to propose any drastic amendments of the main structure of the Covenant. Moreover, there are certain principles connected with the collective organisation of peace which, in our view, it is essential to maintain and to which the Covenant gives expression. Most important of all these principles is the prevention of war. That includes a number of important elements, of which I will mention

four: the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the machinery for the adjustment of grievances, the creation of a deterrent to war, the establishment of an international agreement for the reduction and limitation of armaments."

In the House of Lords on July 29th, Lord Ponsonby asked:

"whether, in preparation for the September meetings of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government will seriously consider putting forward a proposal for the elimination from the Articles of the Covenant of any obligation on the part of nations, Members of the League, to use military force."

For the most part his speech was directed to an analysis of the question of military sanctions, and he dealt first with those measures as envisaged under Article XVI in its present form, i.e. military measures carried out by quota forces.

"Such a heterogeneous mass of force," he said, "from different countries, from different sources, under different commanders, operating in different spheres would require the most careful organisation and would be a matter that really would impose too great a burden on any Power which would have to co-ordinate the varying items. . . . We have made no sort of preparation as to how these varying forces are to be co-ordinated."

No one will deny that there are difficulties—that is why THE NEW COMMONWEALTH favours an organic force—but to deny the absolute impracticability of a mixed collective force is to deny historical fact. Lord Strabolgi was quick to remind the noble Lord of the international force employed during the Boxer Rebellion and of the Knights of St. John.

"Further," Lord Strabolgi continued, "I will take a more recent case, of which I have personal knowledge, the operation of a very mixed naval force in the Western Mediterranean which worked without any plans being made in advance during the Great War. I had some small responsibility in operations in which naval forces took part from the following countries: America, France, Italy, Brazil, Portugal and Great Britain. That means there were six different naval sections operating together. . . ."

His Lordship was even less happy when he came to deal with the practicability of an organic International Police Force and simply indulged in the childish delight of knocking down absurd arguments of his own creation. Here is one of them:

"Just imagine . . . the International Police Force sitting in conference, the commanding officer round a table settling where force must be exercised. They must make preparations. . . . Let us imagine the conference table with the British officer present. . . . They will say to the British officer: 'Now will you tell us exactly what would be the best place for us to bomb in Great Britain? We should like you to tell us exactly where our bombs are to be dropped.' That shows at once the absurdity of supposing that any officer that was manning that International Air Force would give any information whatsoever about his own country; and, therefore, the machines would buzz about in the air without any objectives at all."

Just imagine a noble Lord imagining that! Of course, nobody objects to Lord Ponsonby's imagining things, but it is rather unfortunate that as a result of this innocent pastime, he should conclude that the problems involved in the creation of an international police force are insoluble.

Fortunately for the House, the debate was not allowed to centre entirely round an anti-sanctionist resolution for Lord Allen had given notice:

"to ask whether, at the September meetings of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government will submit a comprehensive statement of policy in favour of setting up the necessary machinery to implement the Articles of the