

The mothers of Europe might now sleep in peace, exclaimed Briand, as he welcomed Germany into the League a few months later.

Locarno has proved, however, a vain hope. By the alliances of France with the successor states of Central Europe, the security of France had become definitely linked with the security of existing frontiers from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Aegean. While Locarno guaranteed France specifically, it extended no specific protection to her allies. France has not, therefore, regarded Locarno as a substitute for a collective guarantee. Her system of alliances has continued and has, indeed, been strengthened since Locarno. Unfortunately also for the cause of disarmament, no *quid pro quo* in the shape of limitation or reduction of armaments was exacted from France. Indeed, France even refused to attend the Geneva Naval Conference held two years later, thereby endangering its success from the outset. And French military budgets have increased since Locarno.

It is extremely difficult for Canadians to understand the French attempt to build security by piling military guarantee on military guarantee. The veriest tyro in military strategy could scarcely see in Germany a menace to France within this generation. But France thinks, or rather feels, in long terms; it is not Germany of the present generation she fears so much as Germany of the future, a Germany recovered from economic convalescence and able to repudiate the Versailles Settlement. France perhaps more than any other country in Western Europe suffers from an inferiority complex due largely to the memory of two invasions within less than half a century, and to a low birth-rate, combined with the fact that its population is less than two-thirds that of Germany. To France the history of western Europe is the history of "a perpetual prize fight of which France has won this round, but of which this round is certainly not the last".¹ France would postpone the next round indefinitely if she could. And she proposes to do so by the approved Napoleonic tradition of force or threat of force, a tradition handed on to the present generation by Bismarck's policy of "blood and iron". The images of Napoleon and Bismarck are seared on the soul of France.

Yet the security which France has in view is undoubtedly wider than mere territorial and political integrity. It includes the security of the Versailles Settlement in Europe. But the Settlement in Eastern Europe might be overturned without endangering French soil. Why, then, should France be so concerned with its maintenance? Clearly the reason is that the Versailles Settlement made

1. Keynes: *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 35.