

*Supply—External Affairs—Geneva*

"The members of the league undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the league. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression, the council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled."

Japan is a member of the League of Nations solely by virtue of the fact that she has acceded "without reservation" to this as well as the other articles.

China points to the forcible occupation of 200,000 square miles of her territory, to the attack on Shanghai, to the bombing of Nanking, her capital, and to numerous other specific acts of armed violence as constituting external aggression (and not merely the threat or danger of it) against her territorial integrity and political independence in plain violation of article 10. The proposition appears so axiomatic as not to fall within the domain of argument.

One other brief paragraph:

The basic feature of Japan's plea which calls for notice at this point is the extraordinary contention that the sending of an army to take forcible possession of the territory of a foreign state is divested of all aggressive import if the invading power issues a simple disclaimer of permanent territorial ambitions and of any intention to stay longer than seems to itself necessary. This position cannot be ignored because it strikes at the root of the whole matter. The league must either reject the Japanese contention or write its covenant down to a pious declaration that aggression depends upon the self-asserted state of mind of the aggressor, thus converting the covenant from a guarantee of peace into an invitation to war.

The case of China is convincingly presented. The conclusion is incontrovertible. I ask, then, that Canada, a nation of course far removed from the immediate scene of action, a nation that, as I have said, is small in numbers but is yet a part of the powerful British Empire, and a nation standing side by side with the American republic, should take a more active part than it has taken in matters of this kind.

The league may be said to be on trial. A great many people believe the league offers no guarantee of peace, and some regard it as an impracticable sort of organization. I spent a month at Geneva last year at the time of the meeting of the assembly, when I had the honour to be a temporary collaborator in the league. One cannot sit day after day watching the sessions of the league without feeling on the one hand that in the present situation it is next to impossible for the league to do any real work in the larger matters that affect the world. An enormous amount of good work is being done in minor matters, but when it comes to affairs that affect the greater nations of the world, undoubtedly the league seems almost impotent.

[Mr. Woodworth.]

Yet on the other hand one could not be there even for a month without realizing that there were wonderful possibilities in this organization. The very fact that men gathered around a common table to discuss matters instead of immediately flying to arms is a very great advance. I think even in the case of China and Japan the very fact that the matter was brought to the league and there discussed was a considerable advance over what would have been possible in the past. But I submit that the future of the league and of international peace demands that we all become more actively conscious of and more definitely interested in international affairs. It may be that the league as now constituted will disappear in time, but I do urge that to-day we cannot get along without some sort of world court and world council—I almost said world parliament. At present we are dreadfully afraid of surrendering our sovereignty to any central body; in the last resort we, as nations, reserve the right to decide things for ourselves. After the great war the machinery of the league was set up in the hope that we might avoid another great catastrophe. I submit, however, that if that catastrophe is to be avoided we must be true to the principles of the league and must be more active in our interest in it, and we must assume a larger responsibility than we have done in the past.

I would urge upon the Prime Minister and the government that they should not be too hesitant in instructing delegations to go just as far as possible in carrying out the obligations which we have assumed under the treaty.

Mr. BENNETT: I assume the hon. gentleman expects me to make a very few observations on this matter, because I would not want my hon. friend to charge the government with any effort to prevent the fullest and freest discussion of the League of Nations. I am conscious of the fact that many people are convinced that the League of Nations has failed, to some extent, at a critical time to discharge the responsibilities which were expected of it. On the other hand, I am free to say that as I read the documents I cannot see that the League of Nations could have done very much other than it did do, under the circumstances which then existed.

We have to ask ourselves this simple question: If there had been no league of nations what would have happened? It seems to me that the test is not whether the league has accomplished all that we expected it to accomplish; rather we should ask ourselves whether or not it has accomplished something that has