

on which rises, in the purity of its lines and the harmony of its proportions, this magnificent palace of legislation, which has sprung phoenix-like from the ashes of the one destroyed by fire only four years ago. This legislative palace of Canada is "the House" of the Canadian nation; and all the citizens of this great country may well be proud of its majestic beauty so worthy alike of our past and of our future. If I were to permit myself, honourable gentlemen, to indulge in personal reminiscences, I would recall the memories of half a century, and would summon before your vision the huge excavation wrought by the blasting, which, as a mere schoolboy, in 1866, I crossed by unsteady footbridges, that I might traverse the grounds where to-day there lie spread out before us those graceful terraces and that I might reach the splendid parliamentary edifice, where, as to-day, resounded the strokes of the workmen's hammers. Confederation was not yet an accomplished fact; but a year later, with the new régime was inaugurated that glorious parliamentary epoch which has bequeathed to us the names of Macdonald and Cartier, of Brown, of Mackenzie, of Dorion, of Tupper, of Langevin, of Campbell, of Tilley, of Blake, of Chapleau, and finally of him who was the last of the band to disappear from among us, one of the most illustrious of that brilliant galaxy of eminent Canadians, Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Passing from these reminiscences, I will direct your attention to that paragraph in the Speech from the Throne, which treats of the League of Nations, its constitution and functions. That institution, the offspring of the overwhelming cataclysm which shook the nations of the world and the fabric of society to their foundations, has provoked since its creation, as it did before, a vast amount of discussion, and excited criticisms of the most divergent kinds. This conception of a body with a moderating and steadying influence, and possessing a general jurisdiction over a federation of powers, this idea of a great international council charged with the reconciliation of difficulties and differences arising between peoples, and the prevention of war among the nations, is not, indeed, the offspring of the genius of a Wilson, as is so commonly believed. It is an old idea in a new setting. The ancient Greek had a similar institution in what they named the Amphietyonic Council. In modern times Henry IV of France, in elaborating his "Grand Dessein," of which the historians have transmitted to us the details, made

provision for a tribunal of the same character, by which it was hoped to maintain the peace of Europe. There was thus a sort of League of Nations in anticipation. In these later days writers have published interesting studies upon the possibility, the opportunity, and the probable degree of efficacy of such an institution. What is to the credit of Mr. Wilson is that he gave concrete form to this idea in placing before the Council of the Allies a proposition being practically realized, and that he pursued its realization with all the obstinacy which is perhaps the characteristic trait of his personality.

What are we to expect from such a league? Is it to be the arch of an alliance, whose sovereign virtue will henceforth guarantee the world against a recurrence of those terrible experiences through which we have just passed? Or will it end in once more demonstrating the futility of human effort to establish the reign of peace and order on the earth? I will certainly not be so rash as to give a confident answer to such a question. But if asked what we might expect from such a league, I should be inclined to reply, "Neither too much nor too little." In presence of this new institution, I am not disposed to be either excessively optimistic or stubbornly pessimistic, it is too soon, it seems to me, to prognosticate with assurance the outcome of this experiment. The chiefs of the great powers who deliberated at Versailles were willing at least to give it a trial. We cannot do better than follow their example, and, while hoping for the best, avoid illusory expectations on the one hand and equally baseless apprehensions on the other. When we study the constitution of this international political society, we are quite easily convinced that it does not possess any great active or rather, co-active power. But it will possess, perhaps, a real moral power, it is this characteristic which has been recently observed by a distinguished French writer, well known in this country, Mr. Eugène Duthoit, professor of political economy in the university of Lille. Such a moral power, capable of exercising a beneficent and effective influence in the affairs of the world, was seen long ago incarnated in an institution, impersonal and majestic, though without specific form, pact, or constitution. At the period of history to which I am referring there existed in Europe, as there does to-day, a diversity of states, possessing their several ambitions,