

or not, that to-day we are the trading nation we are and enjoy the privileges and advantages we enjoy because we are part of the British Empire. If any gentleman questions that statement, I invite him to study the historic position of this country. I will not traverse it myself to-day, but I invite him to consider it carefully, and as he does so I am sure he will be satisfied that our position to-day as individuals as well as that of our country is attributable to the fact that we occupy a place amongst the commonwealth of nations that is known as the British Empire.

But I accept and always have accepted as a foundation point of my conception of national policy that it would be an extraordinary situation which would drive this country into the position of having to resort to arms. That is the direct side of our foreign policy. The Prime Minister referred to the implications of certain activities of ours; and there is clearly an implication there. It was contended in this house by an hon. member, and it is frequently stated outside,—indeed the Prime Minister this afternoon directed attention to the fact—that the likelihood of our being engaged in war arises from our peculiar relationship to other parts of the world. He dealt with that from two angles: first, our position with respect to the League of Nations; second, our position with respect to the British Empire.

I have said, Mr. Speaker, in this house on more than one occasion that in my judgment there would have been no League of Nations had it been thought by those who were responsible for its creation that the United States of America would not become a continuing member of it. I have grave doubts whether the United Kingdom or many parts of the commonwealth of nations would have become signatories to the covenant had they not believed that the great republic to the south was to become one of the dominant figures in the league. When the president of the United States executed the covenant, when he succeeded in inducing other nations to agree to its being made a part of the treaty of peace, they had the clearest view that it would be accepted and adopted by the country which he represented. It was not accepted, and from that refusal consequences have flowed that are of the gravest moment to the world. To-day I do not personally regard it as of tremendous importance, because the League of Nations has fallen to pieces. The withdrawal of Germany and of Japan, and I think one might say the virtual withdrawal of Italy, means

that the League of Nations has ceased to function for the purposes for which it was created. Therefore, our obligations to the League of Nations have become much less than they were when in the full flood of public opinion it was launched upon the world as the organization that would cure many of the evils from which we suffered.

Its history has been very interesting. I am still an incorrigible optimist with respect to some of its operations. I believe that consultation, discussion between the representatives of the nations of the world, and cooperation of a limited character have achieved very beneficial results. That these results can no longer be very important follows, I think, as a necessary corollary from the fact that the United States is not a member of the league, and that other great powers have withdrawn from it. It is very difficult to think that our relationship to the League of Nations could indirectly impose upon us military operations. But, sir, I must deal very briefly with one point raised by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and that is with respect to sanctions. For it is a matter about which so much has been written and said that it might appear that I was endeavouring to escape making any observation about it at all if I did not refer to it.

Everyone knows that a statute without sanctions is valueless. I can remember reading a great address by Edward Blake dealing with the question of the value of sanctions with respect to legislation. What good is it to place upon the statute books a number of prohibitions unless you also provide that a breach of them shall involve penalties and punishment? "Thou shalt not" was thundered from Sinai, and has found a place in our statute books; but unless there is some punishment following a breach of any prohibition, whatever it may be, then the prohibition becomes of little value.

A sanction determines largely the value of a statute. If you read the criminal code you will have a clearer appreciation of what I mean. For the breaches of statutes we provide adequate penalties. The sanction for non-performance of an obligation in our criminal law is well understood, and a sanction sounding in damages in civil matters is not unknown to most of us. But I will agree with every member of this house that sanctions no longer became a reality with respect to the covenant of the League of Nations when the United States withdrew, when Germany withdrew, when Japan withdrew.