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We suffer in public opinion from a class of critics which say that we are the fantastic product of idle dreamers who are going to have no effect upon the world's history, whose labours can only result, if they result in anything, in disarming the peaceably disposed nations of the world and leaving them an easier prey to those who are not peaceably disposed. Those are the critics of one kind. There are critics of another type -- I hope Lord Robert Cecil will forgive me if I sometimes think he belongs to them -- by whom we are regarded as almost a substitute for national organisations, or at any rate for foreign offices and inter-war offices, that in our efforts, all separate/national efforts of every nation in the world must be completely merged, and who have a view -- I think in his own epigrammatic phrase -- that we were to be all, for if we were not all, we should soon be nothing. I much prefer that kind of critic to the first kind; I much prefer the great idealist who sees these visions of this new world always before him, and I am far from saying that they are predestined to ultimate defeat. But I would warn every man and every woman in this room that if ever we are to grow to the heights of that great ideal, ~~by slow stages~~ it must be by slow stages, by careful re-modelling of our machinery to meet new responsibilities, and the mere fact that there is some great work to be done and that in the League of Nations there may some day be found a machinery for doing it, is not a sufficient reason for plunging into tasks for which at this moment we are very imperfectly equipped, for if we were to rush in unasked to deal with some great catastrophe and if we showed, as we well might, that we had undertaken a task at present far greater than our ability, if in other words we insisted upon using an imperfect machinery in such a manner that it broke in our hands, then I should venture to say we should be doing a lasting injury to an institution on which I, like Lord

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