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114 City Councillor Street, Montreal

November 20, 1924

The Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden, G.C.M.G.
President, League of Nations Society in Canada,

Dear Sir:-

It was with great pleasure that I listened to your address at the Peoples' Forum, in Montreal, on November 9th, on the League of Nations, and your explanation and advocacy of the Geneva Protocol on Arbitration.

I see by yesterday's paper that the British Cabinet has asked the League Council not to discuss the Protocol at its forthcoming session at Rome, but to delay discussion until the Cabinet shall have had time to consult with the British Dominions.

Any delay in ratification or danger of non-ratification of the Protocol seems to me most unfortunate. No scheme of arbitration or of disarmament is at all possible which will meet with the unqualified approval of all the states interested. There must be compromise and mutual concession. It is on the basis of such compromises and concessions that a Protocol was drawn up at Geneva which received the unanimous endorsement of the representatives of the forty-seven (?) states there present. If the British Government should insist on ~~her point of view~~ ^{more than minor modifications} as a condition of ratification, the other states are apt to take up a similar attitude and endanger the scheme altogether.

It is feared that the ratification of the Protocol might involve Britain in commitments and risks of war in connection with matters with which Britain is not concerned. But any war in any part of the world is bound to interest and perhaps involve the British Empire. The risk of complications and of war which Britain runs in the absence of such a Protocol is greater than any risk involved by the ratification of the Protocol. It is not a case of increasing commitments and risks by ratification, but of substituting a lesser for a greater risk, the risk of commitments under a universal scheme for the risks involved by the absence of such a scheme.

Indeed, the best safeguard against war and against those very commitments and complications which many fear may result from ratification of the Protocol is the Protocol itself. For peace depends upon the creation of a world opinion against war as a means of settling disputes and of a spirit of mutual trust and concession of which the unanimous adoption of the Protocol at Geneva is a striking testimony and which the ratification of the Protocol would go far to strengthen.