The League of Nations: Successes and Failures

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Volume 11 • Number 1
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As an accompaniment of the economic and financial crisis the world has been afflicted with a general political unrest and an increase of mistrust and uncertainty in international relations. In this situation public opinion everywhere has turned its critical attention to the League of Nations, founded twelve years ago for the purpose of combating just such tendencies, and to promote international cooperation and safeguard peace. The question being asked is: What has the League of Nations done, what is it doing, to alleviate the crisis and help towards a solution of the world's urgent and complicated problems? The question is often asked skeptically, implying adverse criticism of the League's activities and doubt regarding its prospects.

In my opinion, criticism of what the League has done is necessary and useful; but to be as useful as possible the criticism must be discriminating. We must recognize frankly and fairly what the League has accomplished and what are its assets; we must make just as frank an appraisal of the respects in which it has not fulfilled its mission so as to decide fairly what constitute its liabilities.

1. THE MISSION OF THE LEAGUE

The general objects for which the League of Nations was founded in January 1920, and the hopes that attached to it, are well known. Exasperated and horror-stricken at the fearful sacrifices entailed by the World War, at the blood spilt and at the moral as well as the material damage, mankind demanded the ending of that period in the world's development in which war was considered a normal political instrument for the settlement of international disputes. The introductory words of the Covenant stress the League's foremost object — to promote international cooperation and to safeguard international peace and security.

In addition to these moral reasons there were also economic and political reasons why it was necessary to make a tremendous effort to establish a sound basis for future peace and security. But the moral reasons, which matured naturally in the spiritual atmosphere prevailing at the end of the war, were the most
powerful. One principle settled firmly by the war was that democracy and racial and social justice should replace the obsolete political organisms hitherto tolerated in many parts of Europe. It goes without saying that once such a principle had been accepted there no longer was any place for international policies based on the military or economic supremacy of any Power or of any one social class, or for the periodical equalization of the military and material forces of rival Powers by means of violence, or for military and other secret treaties, or for armed peace. In other words, the idea of an international organization for the purpose of peace and order was only a logical consequence of the sovereign ideas which brought about the political reorganization of large parts of Europe and of the world during the years 1917, 1918 and 1919.

The twenty-six Articles of the Covenant are evidence that the nations which decided in favor of the new policy foresaw correctly what was necessary to realize it. They saw that it was necessary:

1. First and foremost, to accept and to maintain the obligation never wilfully to resort to war, thereby renouncing one of the most important and far-reaching rights of sovereignty, and to recognize the necessity of reducing national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety.

2. As a logical consequence of the first obligation, to accept and maintain the obligation to submit all international disputes likely to end in a rupture to arbitration, or to the Permanent Court of International Justice, or to the Council of the League for inquiry and award, as well as to respect the verdicts and recommendations of those organs.

3. And finally to accept the far-reaching obligation to maintain international peace solidarity, i.e., to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of all states members of the League, and even to preserve and protect this integrity and independence against external aggression, and to view any resort to war in disregard of obligations under the Covenant as an act of war against all other members of the League, and to participate in subjecting the offending state to all the “sanctions” provided for in the Covenant.

With these three fundamental obligations must be mentioned one fundamental guarantee to all the members of the League. No state which is a member of the League is considered to have renounced its sovereignty fully. In other words, the League in its
present form does not pretend to be a super-state, and in negotiations and in reaching decisions unanimity is required. At the same time the theoretical equality of all nations, great or small, is duly respected, although quite justly the Great Powers are assured predominance in practice, corresponding to the far greater measure of their duties and responsibilities in the management of world policy.

In short, in establishing the League of Nations the world made a bold effort to safeguard peace and create a basis for developing international coöperation. By means of a sort of voluntary social contract between civilized nations it attempted to transplant into the sphere of international relations those principles of a democratic legal system known in the sphere of internal national order.

II. THE LEAGUE AT WORK

What testimony do the years which have elapsed furnish concerning the success or the failure of this attempt? In trying to answer that question, we must bear in mind that during this period mankind has confronted the most difficult tasks in its history, and that the principal aim — the establishment of peace — involved a revolutionary change in the methods of foreign policy and a complete overturn of the world’s existing political thought and action.

Before the war the foreign policy of all countries was as a rule egoistic and self-centered. It was determined by national interests or by the interests of some particular class. Even if on special occasions some statesman showed that he was conscious of the solidarity of all mankind, his action never progressed to the point of acquiring the form of general political organization. Decisions of war and peace, and the free use of national forces, were considered the most important prerogatives of national sovereignty, and were untouchable. The new policy, as formulated in the text of the Covenant, demanded from signatory states that they should realize that none of them is alone in the world, and that each forms a component part of the international commonwealth; that the particular interests of each must be brought into harmony with the interests of others; and finally that there are certain moral and material interests common to all nations, and that to secure these each must resign certain of its sovereign rights. And I wish to emphasize this point: it was not only a question of understanding these principles, but of actively cooperating
and participating as members of the League in establishing and preserving them.

The fulfilment of this conception was not made possible by the mere signing of the Covenant. Success was conditional upon a complete transformation of existing traditions in the sphere of foreign policy, upon the political education of the wide masses of electors in all countries, and upon the development of a new mentality in political parties and parliaments. This is a process requiring the conscious effort of the best spiritual leaders of each nation, and requiring much time and vast patience.

For this reason it is not possible even now, after several years, to pass a definite verdict on the League. All that is possible is to point out what has been achieved, the stages through which the struggle between old and new political methods is passing, and how this struggle is reflected in the League’s successes and failures. Any estimate of the League can still have only a provisional and relative character.

III. THE ROLE OF THE LEAGUE IN ORGANIZING PEACE, ORDER AND SECURITY

To carry out the aim of safeguarding international peace, order and security the Covenant imposes upon League members the obligation to abstain from waging wars to settle disputes with one another, and instead to settle them by peaceful means; and it entrusts the organs of the League with the task of adopting suitable measures, in case of aggression or a threat of aggression, to uphold the said obligation. Thus the Covenant provides not only that the League shall act as conciliator, but in certain events also as judge, and sometimes even as policeman. It further explicitly imposes on the League the duty of preparing a plan for disarmament compatible with national safety, and of insisting on and supervising the systematic and gradual reduction of national armaments.

The Covenant, having imposed on members of the League the obligation not to conclude any treaties or enter into any engagements inconsistent with its terms, gave the League the right and duty of inspecting all international treaties. Thus Article 18 stipulates that every treaty or international engagement entered into by a member of the League shall be registered with the Secretariat and shall be published by it as soon as possible. No treaty made by a League member is binding until so registered.
If we try to answer the question how the League of Nations has carried out these various functions we must turn first to its efforts to provide and strengthen appropriate pacific instruments. Here the Permanent Court of International Justice plays an important part. Its work is complemented by the League's systematic efforts to insure that the idea of arbitral tribunals and of commissions of arbitration shall be definitely recognized and adopted, and that model types of arbitration and conciliation treaties shall be prepared for any member wishing to make a treaty of that sort. In this field the League has accomplished wonders. The gist of this work is embodied in the so-called General Act (prepared in 1928 by the Security Commission of the League), which also contains a collection of specimen treaties. Nor must we omit to mention the effort to complete an examination of the theory of all forms of peaceful arbitration procedure (good offices, mediation, etc.) possible on the basis of the various Articles of the Covenant, and to investigate how these procedures might be extended and improved. These discussions, even when they result only in unfinished projects, such as the project for bringing the Kellogg Pact into harmony with the Covenant, are not devoid of interest and importance.

In a survey such as this we of course should concern ourselves more with practical accomplishments than with developments of theory. But the work which I have been describing did have many practical results.

In the first place, the importance of the concrete work for peace accomplished by the Permanent Court is beyond all dispute. The verdicts which it has given on actual disputes brought before it, either in virtue of international treaties or at the instigation of the Council, as well as the recommendations which it has made in individual cases at the request of the Council, are highly important acts in the cause of peace. The authority of the Court has become a living factor for peace, recognized as such by many nations, who by accepting the facultative clause have obligated themselves to apply to the Court for a solution of most international disputes of a legal nature.

Also of great practical political importance are the League's efforts in the field of arbitration and conciliation. The latest volume of treaties of arbitration, conciliation and guarantee, published periodically by the Secretariat of the League, enumerates about two hundred treaties, testifying to the extent and
popularity of the new international political methods. The effectiveness of the treaties remains to be seen, because few of them have so far received practical application. That very fact, however, is proof that the existence of these treaties, binding the signatory nations to pursue a pacific policy and to apply peaceful methods to the settlement of disputes, acts as a powerful brake on international conflicts and as an important factor for peace.

Public opinion does not deny the League’s useful rôle in extending the idea of arbitration, though often it fails to appreciate it fully. Rather, real criticism usually is directed at the League’s efforts to solve specific conflicts. Actually, the League’s record is a creditable one in this respect. True, many of the conflicts which it took in hand grew out of the work of reconstruction in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe — in other words, the questions involved were part of the epilogue of the Great War and almost all concerned small or medium-sized nations. But if this circumstance gave the League a certain advantage, a further fact must not be forgotten — that these questions came up for settlement at a time when the League had only just begun to formulate its procedure, to try out its methods, and in general to build up its authority.

The record of disputes settled by the League includes several which came before it early in its existence. I shall mention only the chief ones. First let me recall the dispute between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands. This dispute, which was a real menace to peace, was settled by the Council in June 1921, with the aid of a special commission of legal experts and of a commission of inquiry. The sovereignty of Finland over the islands was recognized, but Sweden was given a guarantee that they would never be used as a fortress, that they would be neutralized, and that she should receive certain rights in them through a special autonomous statute. This solution was accepted by both parties. In the Polish-Lithuanian dispute over the town of Vilna, which broke out in the autumn of 1920, it became the task of the Council to avert war between the two countries. Although hostilities had really already begun, the Council, aided by a Military Commission of Control, established neutral zones within the disputed territory and thus did in fact prevent a war. That achievement remains, even though the Council failed to bring about a settlement acceptable to both parties of the question of Vilna itself. Another service to peace was the solution of the
question of the partition of Upper Silesia. In the spring of 1921 the dispute had grown to such proportions that it might easily have led to open hostilities between Poland and Germany, as well as to serious dissensions between the Allies. The Council carried out the partition of the disputed territory with the greatest possible regard for the results of the plebiscite, and made permanent peace in that part of Europe more likely by imposing on each party, through a special Convention, the obligation to respect the minorities remaining under its control. Also of importance was the work of the Council during the post-war consolidation of Albania; during the solution of the Memel question; and in the adjustment of frontiers between Poland and Czechoslovakia (the question of Javorina), between Czechoslovakia and Hungary (the question of Salgo-Tarjan), and between Yugoslavia and Hungary.

The League of Nations also was active in cases which did not arise from territorial changes due to the World War.

The conflict which arose between Greece and Italy in August 1923 following the assassination of the Italian members of an Inter-Allied Boundary Commission on Greek territory was one of the most interesting and important cases in this category. Italy sent a strong note to the Greek Government demanding instant satisfaction, and as the Greek Government refused all responsibility for the incident and consequently rejected some of the Italian demands, Italy resorted to military operations and occupied the island of Corfu. The case, brought before the Council at the request of Greece, was extremely difficult. Not only was one of the parties to the dispute a Great Power which from the beginning had had a representative on the Council, but also it was just this party which refused to recognize the competence of the League in the matter by pointing out that the Conference of Ambassadors had jurisdiction and by asserting that the occupation of Corfu was only provisional, that it was meant only to guarantee the payment of reparations by Greece, and that it did not and could not endanger peace. The Conference of Ambassadors itself took the load off the shoulders of the League by declaring its willingness to solve the conflict; and in the end the conflict was actually settled by the Conference. Nevertheless, the thanks of those who were anxiously watching to see how the League would face this test went out to the Council for not having flinched and for the strong determination which it evidenced
not to allow the conflict to be settled by other than peaceful means. In principle the Council upheld its right to deal with every sort of dispute which could lead to war.

An example of direct initiative by the Council on behalf of peace was given during the conflict which broke out between Greece and Bulgaria in October 1925, following the shooting of a Greek frontier sentry by a Bulgarian sentry. The dangerous nature of this incident was illustrated by the fact that the Greek Government at once issued orders that its third Army Corps should invade Bulgarian territory. The Council, summoned at the request of the Bulgarian Government, took immediate steps not only to prevent hostilities, but also to settle the case by instituting an inquiry and by stipulating the measure of satisfaction which Greece had a right to demand from the Bulgarian Government.¹

The conflict between China and Japan, brought to Geneva on September 18, 1931, and still under consideration, is without doubt the most serious matter with which the League of Nations has yet been confronted. There is no use in denying that it represents a certain crisis for the League. Pleading the necessity of intervening to maintain its interests amid the chaotic and uncertain conditions prevailing in China, a Great Power resorted to military operations. Though this Great Power had been a member of the Council of the League from the beginning, the procedure which it adopted represented a revival of methods which are not the methods of the League. Complicating the question, too, is the fact that the parties to the conflict are the largest Asian nation and the Asian nation which is politically the most powerful; also the further fact that the conflict is taking place in an area in which the vital interests of a third Great Power are affected (viz. of the British Empire), as well as the interests of two other Great Powers which are not members of the League (viz. the United States and Soviet Russia). In other words, the League is confronted with a problem of truly world significance.

During its earlier efforts to deal with this conflict the League, supported by the United States, accomplished something. After a few weeks of open warfare it become possible to arrest the firing of guns and cannon, the Japanese troops were at last recalled from the territory of China proper, and a number of disputed questions were transferred to the sphere of diplomatic negotia-

¹ I should perhaps mention at this point the successful intervention of Aristide Briand, as President of the Council, in the conflict between Bolivia and Peru in 1930, which in the end led to a peaceful settlement of the whole dispute.
tion. The League demonstrated that it is a moral factor in the cause of peace which no Great Power can afford to ignore.

At the same time it is necessary to emphasize that the success of the League of Nations in this case — as far as we are in a position today to judge — was only a partial success. The whole procedure adopted by the League was too protracted, it was not able to prevent the actual outbreak of hostilities in which serious losses of life and property occurred, it has not been able to restore the whole political situation as it existed before the conflict, and it has left the organs of the League confronted with the serious task of arranging an honorable settlement of the new situation growing out of the creation of an independent Manchuria under the direct influence of Japanese policy and under Japanese leadership.

Although a friend and adherent of the League of Nations, I am constrained to admit openly that in this flagrant case the Geneva institution has not mustered up sufficient courage to call certain events and actions by their proper names and to resort to the application of appropriate articles of the Covenant. It tried to avoid, and actually did avoid, carrying out the sanctions which in this case were justified, and it refrained from using all the forces and methods appertaining to sovereign executive power more than was necessary and more than was profitable not only from the point of view of a just and speedy settlement of the whole conflict, but also from the point of view of the reputation and authority of the League itself. The fact remains that the case between China and Japan has been solved neither by the Council nor by the Assembly. About the time this study appears in print there will be a meeting of the competent Commission, consisting of nineteen members, to hear the report of the Commission of Inquiry which was sent to Manchuria and which will prepare definite proposals to lay before the Assembly.

The situation of the League will certainly not be easy if the report recommends the non-recognition of the existing state of affairs in Manchuria. What answer will Japan then give? And what answer will be given by Geneva if Japan announces that it does not intend to change its policy? Assuredly there are many of us in Geneva who will uncompromisingly defend the authority and the prerogatives of the League of Nations. This means that a serious crisis of the whole institution cannot be averted. It will be a great trial of the League's strength and authority. I consider
that the League will never be able to recognize a state of affairs created by methods not countenanced by the Covenant.

Despite our anxiety over this grave case, we must not be led into minimizing the activities of the League as the guardian of peace, or its theoretical work to improve the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, or its record in the practical cases in which it has taken either a direct or indirect rôle, or its general propaganda in behalf of the idea of peace, which is implied in its very being and in all its activities.

Take, for example, the growth on all sides of the moral conviction that violence as an instrument of international policy should be abolished and that war is a crime. The well-nigh universal signature of the Kellogg Pact shows that this conviction is penetrating even official circles and is becoming a dominating axiom in the foreign policy of countries. That in itself represents an enormous progress over the pre-war mentality. The old military conceptions and methods are steadily retreating into the background; and when they are used, it often is only as a sort of emergency exit. In official treaties, in the pronouncements of diplomats and politicians, even in the minds of the masses, the principle that war is a crime is gradually gaining ground, and with it the consciousness of the paramount moral duty of working for peace and of maintaining peace.

We may go even further. The peaceful settlement of international disputes is becoming the official method of political procedure; it is becoming the normal rule, the recognized duty. Settlement by war is beginning to be considered immoral and abnormal. Almost all countries are now linked together by bilateral or multilateral treaties, or by general pacts and declarations, stipulating in detail the peaceful procedure to be adopted in the event of disputes. Furthermore, there is a general will to improve the procedure laid down in these treaties and in the Covenant, so as to insure a peaceful settlement at all costs and make certain that if one institution or instrument fails another will be resorted to automatically. The originators of this endeavor are not individuals — pacifists or pacifist groups — but the states and governments themselves and their diplomatic and political representatives.

If asked to be more precise in defining the present weak points of the League of Nations, I would say the following:

1. As the conflict between China and Japan shows, the great handicap on the efficacious functioning of the League lies in the
fact that the two largest nations of the world, the United States and Soviet Russia, are not members. This determines to a great extent the policy of Great Britain in all questions touching the League, in a sense unfavorable to the League.

2. The possibility of successful action by the League of Nations is further limited by the fact that the Great Powers of Europe often subordinate their policy at Geneva to the needs of their respective internal politics. Of the five European Great Powers, three are in the throes of revolutionary ferment: Germany is under the influence of Hitler’s revolutionary movement, Italy under that of the Fascist revolution, and Russia under that of the Communist revolution. The more abnormal the situation of the chief members of the League, the more difficult it is for the League to function, its members being sovereign nations.

3. The fact that certain Great Powers, notably Germany and Italy, think of their participation in the League above all as a medium of furthering their own wishes and aspirations, regardless of the claims, wishes or even rights of other nations, is clearly the cause of a crisis in the League and leads to skepticism regarding the League’s efficacy.

4. The League sometimes finds it difficult to adjust the relations of the Great Powers with the small or medium-sized Powers. The Great Powers do not like to be overruled by the votes of a large group of small nations; while the latter are reluctant to tolerate the pressure of the Great Powers. This mutual dislike is often exaggerated on both sides. An uncompromising enforcement of international democracy at Geneva would jeopardize the League’s existence. As I said before, friends of the League must have the courage to recognize that those who have greater duties and responsibilities have a right to demand greater influence in the formation of decisions. But that must not mean that the votes of the smaller nations are ignored, and especially it must not mean that decisions affecting their interests shall be taken without hearing their opinion and without their consent.

This frank statement of the weak points of the League of Nations does not mean that it is bankrupt. To state its perplexities and difficulties is not to condemn it. I do not want to be either the judge or the advocate of the League. I only wish to state the facts as they appear to me. The existence of the weak points and difficulties to which I have referred is the fault of the member nations themselves and not of the institution as such.
IV. THE LEAGUE AND DISARMAMENT

The task of finding a solution of the disarmament problem was set the League in Article 8 of the Covenant. Its progress in this field is often taken as a criterion of its success or failure.

Now it is possible to continue forever the theoretical discussion of the question whether disarmament is the preliminary condition of security or its consequence. The experience of the past twelve years shows distinctly that effective disarmament can be and will be carried out only as a natural result of a general victory of the new political methods instituted after the war, and of the sincere application of the new international legal system described in broad outlines above. In a period of constant struggle between the old and the new systems, in an era which in the main has been devoted to collecting experience of the new international method, there does not as yet exist the measure of confidence and assurance necessary for a reduction of national armaments corresponding to our wishes and desires. Even those fifty-six signatures to the Covenant and those two hundred treaties of arbitration and conciliation, the constituent factors of the new policy, cannot prove whether or not the whole mechanism of pacific method exists merely on paper, whether it functions only in special cases, and whether it will function also in extraordinary and difficult cases.

Let me put the matter still more explicitly. Effective disarmament does not depend on the solemn declaration of the governments concerned that they despise war and wish to settle all their disputes solely by pacific methods. It does not require only that effective instruments exist to bring about such pacific solutions. It requires effective and real guarantees to cover the contingency that the said declaration is not kept, that the awards of the arbitral organs are not respected, and that despite all the prestige of the new legal system some gross violence nevertheless occurs. In other words, effective, far-reaching disarmament necessitates the completion of the whole structure of the new international legal order and the organization of international security to guarantee the execution of Articles 10, 11 and 16 of the Covenant.

I am not emphasizing some one-sided thesis of security such as sometimes is propounded in France. I lay stress on a system, valid for all, and safeguarding the security of countries such as
Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria as well as of countries which were in the Allied camp in the war. Disarmament in this sense can and will become the crowning masterpiece of the work carried forward by the League during these first years of its existence, aiming as it has done to give effective application to the political methods and international legal order of the new day.

It is clear that the League of Nations has already accomplished something useful in the field of disarmament. Its deliberations have contributed greatly to the general elucidation of the problem and have prepared the ground for its technical solution. But the most important result of these deliberations has been that they have imprinted upon the minds of those in power the idea that even the question of national armaments is not completely a private national affair, that it is destined to become an international affair, that as such it will have to be settled in accordance with the common interests of all states, and that sooner or later nations will have to concede to an international conference the right to determine the extent of various national armaments and systematically to inspect and control those armaments through organs appointed for the purpose.

The International Disarmament Conference, which has just concluded the first phase of its work in Geneva, achieved a partial yet important success. I am of the opinion that if the Conference will continue to work with the same sincerity that it has worked hitherto, the second phase of the Conference will see further steps forward — in carrying out so-called “qualitative disarmament,” in reducing effective armed forces and military budgets, as called for in the concluding resolution of the Conference, and thus bringing into effect the first international treaty of disarmament ever drafted. If the Conference succeeds to that extent, it will mean a tremendous success for the League of Nations, which has been busily preparing the ground during all these recent years.

V. LEAGUE ACTIVITIES IN ECONOMICS, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE

Preceding pages have made it clear, I hope, that I do not over-rate the successes of the League of Nations in the political sphere, and that I am aware that the great progress of the idea of peace, represented especially by the increasing popularity of the idea of arbitration and by the rejection of war as a means of national policy, does not yet mean the realization of a living and complete
international legal order either in Europe or in the world as a whole. I will not be accused of partiality, then, if I emphasize some achievements in other departments in which the League has been busy, namely the international economic and financial coöperation organized with remarkable success by the League during the past twelve years, and also the coöperation which it has fostered in humanitarian, social, intellectual and cultural matters. There is hardly a department of human or national activity which has not become an object of the League's solicitude. As a result, the League has become an important international center for coördinating work in all these questions.

I need only recall the League's coöperation in the task of bringing economic and financial relief to such countries as Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, and its effort to promote closer economic collaboration between nations and to remove various obstacles in the way of international trade and transport. This work at present is under the shadow of a grave crisis. But in the future it surely is going to be extended and made even more comprehensive.

Nor must I omit to mention the extensive activities of the League in the social and humanitarian sphere, including the care of refugees, the struggle against epidemics, the protection of women and children, and the fight against drugs, especially opium. Useful results have also been achieved in the centers of intellectual coöperation founded by the League, such as the International Institute for Intellectual Coöperation in Paris and the International Institute for Educational Cinematography in Rome. Possibly much of this work could have been undertaken with equal success by private enterprise; but the part of the result which cannot be minimized is the fact that the work as actually organized has brought the nations into official contact periodically and even permanently. This is no mean psychological achievement. These activities will not be the salvation of the world, and their importance must not be underrated. But the mere creation of a close net of economic, cultural, social and humanitarian relations between most of the nations of the world deserves our sincere recognition and grateful support.

VI. THE FUTURE

All that I have said in favor of the League of Nations does not hide the fact that it is not a perfect instrument for maintaining peace and that it does not fulfill all the expectations originally
built upon it. I have tried to point out the chief reasons for this. Some of these reasons are of a temporary character, others go deeper — perhaps they even are permanent.

The Constitution of the League, that is to say its Covenant, needs improving. It should be brought into full harmony with the ideas and moral basis of international peace policy. In other words, an attempt should be made to prohibit war altogether, which means harmonizing the Covenant with the Kellogg Pact. Some may also demand that an attempt be made to harmonize not only the sentiments of the nations, but also to coordinate their vital interests, i.e., to give greater executive power to the Council, so that the principle of unanimous decisions may be abolished and replaced by majority decisions. That would mean the creation of a super-state. I do not think the world is ripe for this.

The League of Nations is not something abstract. It is a concrete organization of nations which have voluntarily assumed the duties of membership and which have joined together in a great common task. This task can be fulfilled only if all members remain actuated by the desire to pursue the common aim and to renounce on its behalf aims and interests of their own: that is to say, if all members seek to harmonize their special national interests with the interests of other nations on the platform of the Covenant. What must be sought is a common denominator of two, or three, or even of all fifty-six divergent national interests — this denominator corresponding to the common higher interests of mankind.

If a crisis occurs the reason will not be far to seek, for it is no easy matter to find in each case this synthesis of national interests — nor is there always adequate good will to find it, so easily do egotistical national tendencies and aims gain predominance over the will to international coöperaction. The problem of the League of Nations, then, is simply a problem of further international education. I myself believe firmly in the eventual success of this process of education. Consequently I believe in the future of the League of Nations. What would an idealistic politician who believes sincerely in goodness, truth and the principle of the constant if slow progress and improvement of the human race, otherwise do in politics and in public life in general, if he did not cherish this faith?