

of territory and those who had been to a varying extent dismembered and disarmed as a result of the Treaty of Versailles. Despite numerous resolutions and treaties renouncing war, it was felt in some quarters that the League's machinery, excellent as it was and successful as it had been in very many cases, might not meet the test of a dispute in which one or more of the parties was a major Power.

Perhaps the first really serious test arose in connection with the dispute between Japan and China with reference to Manchuria. The League's machinery undoubtedly failed on that occasion to prevent what practically every member of the League regarded as a breach of the principles of Geneva, and this case also helped to emphasize the complexity of some of these questions, in which there are so frequently rights and wrongs on both sides, and the extreme difficulty of ascertaining the actual facts and merits with the necessary rapidity. A further test of the League's machinery took place in connection with the war between Paraguay and Bolivia which, unfortunately, is still continuing, and which the best efforts of the League of Nations and of the American Powers have for a lengthy period been unable to suppress. The recent notices of the intention of Japan and Germany to withdraw from the League of Nations (though to some extent compensated for by the entry of Mexico, Russia, and Turkey, and the increasing co-operation shown by the United States of America) have nevertheless created a breach in the League's universality which, of course, vitally affects the application of the League machinery.

It is undoubtedly felt in some quarters that the League's collective system of maintaining the peace of the world must fail unless the membership of the League is practically universal, and unless, and this is the point that we have arrived at now, every Power can be relied upon to implement its undertakings in the fullest degree, or, if that cannot be depended upon (and there are many who consider it cannot), unless some means is provided of enforcing, if necessary by arms, the application of the principles of the Covenant.

In Europe, even more than in any other part of the world, there exist countless causes of international misunderstandings and disputes, and with Germany's announcement of withdrawal from the League, while at the same time vigorously pressing a campaign of national preparation, it is not surprising that neighbouring countries have taken alarm or that in many cases those responsible for the affairs of European countries have seriously doubted whether they can depend for their security solely upon the machinery provided at Geneva.

Too often the only alternative has appeared to be rearmament and preparation for war. It is perhaps not too much to say that until last week practically every Power in the world has been thinking along those lines. Disarmament and security are not only twin problems—they are opposing problems. Some have held the view that you cannot have disarmament before you have security, others that you cannot have security before you have disarmament, and the net result up to the present, despite the efforts of the Disarmament Conference extending over a period of years, is that in the present state of world tension you can have neither the one nor the other. Instead of disarming, therefore, the world is either rearming or busily preparing to do so. As a European statesman has put it, mankind is preparing to commit suicide.

Let me at this stage pause to remark that it is not sufficient to pass resolutions in favour of disarmament, as is so widely done throughout the world; it is not sufficient that all peoples, generally speaking, urgently desire peace and disarmament; it is not sufficient to have machinery set up to deal with international disputes: none of these things is sufficient unless and until each nation can and does feel that the security of its people is fully safeguarded without arms.

We may all agree with complete unanimity that war is an anachronism and a nightmare that should be removed from the world, and undoubtedly it helps to have this sentiment repeatedly brought before all Governments and peoples, but it is not enough so long as any doubt exists as to whether the peace structure will stand any strain that may be placed upon it by a warlike Power, and so long as any doubt exists that all countries can be relied upon to abide by the collective system that they have deliberately bound themselves to accept. At the present time no prudent Government, responsible for the lives and well-being of millions of people, could possibly feel that their security is fully safeguarded without armaments.

The French people have perhaps been more doubtful than any others of the efficacy of the Geneva arrangements to preserve the peace of the world, and for two decades successive French Governments have been pressing for some more definite and tangible guarantee of the security of their people. This is by no means difficult to understand considering the geographical position of France and