

The League of Nations as a Factor in World Peace

Radio broadcasting undoubtedly takes a high place as a definite factor in world peace because through it the barriers of distance and misunderstandings are reduced. Another force working definitely and objectively to the same end is the League of Nations and listeners from 2YA were recently afforded the opportunity of learning something of the League's work from a New Zealander on its permanent secretariat, Mr. J. V. Wilson. The main points of this address are here reproduced.

THE League of Nations, to which nearly all the States of the world belong, does many things for the common good or its members. To name a few examples among many, it works to prevent the spread of disease, to adjust economic and labour conditions between nations, to suppress evils like the drug traffic. It is in everyday, unspectacular work of this kind that the Assembly of the League and its permanent Secretariat at Geneva (as a member of which I have been honoured by an invitation to address you) is chiefly occupied. If you were to read one of the many pamphlets on the League's work you would, I think, be surprised at the number of tasks with which the League has been entrusted, and at their wide scope—for the League's work is universal, and not merely European, as some people think.

There is, however, one work of the League in which everyone may be expected to take some interest, and that is, what it does to prevent war; and first let me refer to what the League means to Britain, to which, of all countries, peace must remain the supreme political interest.

THE ATTITUDE OF BRITAIN.

AT the last Assembly of the League, in September, the Foreign Minister of Great Britain, Sir Austen Chamberlain, after consultation with the representatives of the other parts of the British Empire, said: "We base our whole policy on the League of Nations." This, or similar declarations, have often been made by the British Government. Moreover, not only the present Conservative Government of Great Britain, but a Labour or Liberal Government would certainly say the same.

Now the British Government has al-

ways had the reputation of being realistic in politics, and we may take it that when it declares that it is on the League of Nations that it bases its whole policy and the security of the vast interests it has in its charge, it thinks that it is not building on sand. What does this profession mean? It means, essentially, that we see in the League system a better means of keeping the peace than in the old systems, such as alliances. The kernel of the new system is this: that when a threat of war arises, the Council of the League of Nations shall, on the demand of any one member of the League, meet in order to attempt to effect a settlement. This Council is a body which has a right to be heard in such a case because on it sit the representatives—usually the Foreign Ministers themselves—of the great Powers, except, of course, those two which still remain outside the League of Nations—the United States and the Soviet Union—and also representatives of smaller countries. In the face of so representative a body a State which desires to go to war finds itself condemned by the general opinion of the world, and that is a thing which no nation, however strong, can lightly challenge. Experience shows that even if, in a given crisis, one or two countries would be glad to see war break out, the great majority desires peace to be maintained. The problem is how to make this desire effective, and, by forcing the nations to confer, the League's machinery makes possible, to an extent unknown before, the mobilisation of those forces working for peace. In 1914 Sir Edward Grey tried to anticipate the League system: he asked for a confer-

ence of the great Powers, but then there was no obligation to confer.

A PRACTICAL TEST.

THIS system has been put to the test more than once. The latest example occurred two years ago when, owing to a frontier incident, hostilities had actually broken out between Greece and Bulgaria. A telegram from the Bulgarian Government to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, asking for a meeting of the Council, was received at Geneva about 6 o'clock one Monday morning. Within three days the Council met. The conflict was stopped and reparations were exacted from and paid by the nation which was judged to have been in the wrong. Things would not always work as smoothly as this, but such were the facts in this case.

BUT often, as we know, there is tension between countries for a long time before there is any threat of war. Can nothing be done to relieve this tension before war looms near? The situation, too, is provided for in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which declares that it is the friendly right of any member to bring before the Council any circumstances whatever which threatens to disturb the peace of the good understanding between nations on which peace depends. This "friendly right" has been used many times, with good results. Many gathering storms have been dispersed by early reference of a dispute to the Council, which has been able to use its conciliatory influence. The most recent case is that of a quarrel between Poland and Lithuania, dealt with by the Council at its regular three-monthly meeting last December. By the way, lest it be thought that because neither of these countries is a great Power the dispute itself was of

small moment, it may be as well to say that if it had been aggravated it might easily have involved Germany, the Soviet Union, and other Powers. One might say, "Yes, the League is helpful if countries use it, but what of the Great Powers who warn the League off when they themselves have a quarrel?" This "hands off" attitude is certainly not infrequent, but it will not wholly disappear even when the League acquires that full authority to which it is tending, because in a given dispute it will always be a matter of opinion whether a settlement could best be obtained directly through diplomacy, or by a full international discussion through the League. But when a dispute becomes really grave, or war seems imminent, it seems inconceivable that even at the present stage of the League's development it should not be referred to the Council, whether it affected a great Power or a small Power.

IS THERE CO-OPERATION?

SO far I have been dealing with the League's methods of action in crises. Now, people may admit that the new methods are better than the old, but, as methods and machinery are not everything, will feel that no real progress has been made because of a supposed absence of the spirit of co-operation. This objection certainly has weight. Nations have not yet acquired full confidence in one another, and it is well to realise that the growth of this confidence—the sole sure basis of peace—will take time. Take the present concrete problem of the reduction of armaments. Many nations (Great Britain amongst them) desire, both for reasons of economy and for reasons of policy, a big reduction of armaments, and, above all, the cessation of international competition in armaments. The problem is approaching a critical stage, and you will see from the papers that preparations (in which you are taking part, not only as members of the League, but the powers outside the League—such as the

United States and the Soviet Union), are being made for a first conference on the reduction of armaments. It is possible that such a conference will achieve little more than a general limitation, and slight lowering of the present scale of armaments. Yet even a slight reduction voluntarily agreed to by all nations will be a gain, and will tend to create that mutual confidence which will make further and bigger reductions possible. In a way, the success of the league in any one of its works is a thermometer which registers the degree of the world's willingness to co-operate. Sometimes the mercury mounts fairly high, sometimes it drops near to zero; the simile is not perfect, because the league thermometer itself tends to raise the temperature. The Geneva atmosphere, of which a good deal—perhaps too much—is said, has helped to solve many tough problems, but it is nothing miraculous, it merely means the spirit of mutual understanding and compromise, which we have long known in everyday life, but are slow to believe to be applicable to international affairs. This readjustment of opinion is taking place more quickly in some countries than in others, and the fact that the league works with growing success in so many fields is assisting it. If you read attentively the newspaper reports of the work of the League, even if you read no more, you will, I think, come to feel that the League has salvaged much of what has good in the aims of those who fought; and when you think in terms of practical politics of what the alternatives are to the programme of co-operation, which the League sets forth, you will, perhaps, feel less surprise that the leading statesmen of this Empire should declare that they base their whole policy on the League: you will realise that the League has already achieved much, and, given popular interest, will achieve more.

I HOPE I have helped to show the progressive nature of the League's growth, and to correct the common idea that it is an organisation maintained at huge expense to announce to the world that there can be no more war. To prevent war is indeed the principal aim of the League, but the League makes no prophecies—it merely works. Its cost, by the way, to the people of New Zealand, is 1½d. per head per year.

Views in Our Mail Bag

Daylight Saving and Other Points.

N. Cole Baker (Port Waikato): I send my comment on Sidey Time, (though aware that I am rather late in doing so. From the point of view of the farmer (not dairying), I look at it in the following ways. (1) For working hours, we have always worked by the sun and continue to do so. (2) On holidays it is a decided advantage in town to get to shops, banks, etc., an hour earlier, to country people, who are habitually early risers. A great deal of time seems wasted in the city on a summer morning. When travelling, especially by car, you can get on the road earlier, when travelling is most pleasant, as the hotels will give you a meal earlier, and garages are open, etc. (3) For the radio. We miss all the children's sessions and

most of the news session, and in mid-summer, the first hour from the more distant stations. (I don't agree with those who complain of missing the Aussie stations, as they can sit up if they want to.) However, considering the decided advantages of Summer Time, I think the transmission hours should be put off an hour, and the same applies to all indoor entertainments, as there is no benefit to the health of the people to let indoor workers out an hour earlier and then invite them in again to pictures or radio when it is still daylight.

Now for the programmes. They are good, and are improving, but I am afraid the 1YA Trio are not making friends as they should. That they are good musicians, and play high-class music, there is no doubt, but we require education, and they must lead us up gradually. My own standard, which, I think, is fairly representative, includes such works as Bragan's Serenata, Henry VIII Classics (German); Intermezzo "Cavaleria Rusticana," "Faust Overture" (Gounod), "Spring Song," "Melody in F," "Brooklet's Tale" (Jurgmann); "Romance" (Spendsen), "La Paloma," "Blue Danube Waltz," etc. The point is that, as loudspeakers are to be found in average homes, you must supply them with music which sounds natural in that setting, otherwise it has a "canned" effect, and not all music "cans" well, though some does, as, for instance, a brass band always goes well on gramophone or radio. "P.T." (Rotorua) writes: "Since reporting my reception of KGER, Longbeach, California, I have received confirmation from that station. An extract from the letter reads, 'We checked over our programmes of the past and found your reception was correct, and I am enclosing one of our own KGER verification stamps. KGER is operating on only 100 watts.' I have received verification of reception from many American stations, but look upon the receiving of KGER as my best effort on the normal wave band. Had the station been heard only the once, I would not have deemed it as such, but I can rely upon receiving the station under average good conditions. At times, now that the days are drawing in, KGER comes through at fair speaker strength. Of course,

under the same conditions, KFON, Longbeach, California, is quite as strong as 3YA. In passing, I heard KFON announce just recently that they have received permission and are increasing power to 1500 watts. In that case, they should be received in most parts of New Zealand at respectable strength. The American stations are now thick on my dials. Thirty-seven have been heard during the past two weeks.

High Brow Taste Growing.

Workaday (Christchurch): Despite what all the "lowbrow" people may say, if there is one thing that the Broadcasting Company deserves credit for it is the standard which has been set in regard to music. It will be a sorry day for broadcasting when the powers that be agree to cater for the wishes of only the lowbrows. I am not a highbrow nor a lowbrow—I am just between the two in regard to music, with an inclination of late to qualify as a highbrow. I have been a consistent listener for a long while, and I am proud to say that I have now a keener appreciation of what is good music. So must anyone who listens in to any extent. Judging from my own experience, and many people must be like me, broadcasting must mean a great revival in music, that is, of course, if it is taken full advantage of by all lovers of music. There is no greater medium for the intellectual and artistic uplift of the nation than this modern miracle of radio broadcasting, which takes the best of the world's music right into the homes of the people. Music, such as the lowbrow correspondents want, would have a debasing effect on the people. There are enough influences in that direction already. Such lowbrows are not obliged to renew their licenses. They are really so few that the Broadcasting Company would never miss the loss of their license fees.

Length of Sermons.

Cashmere (Christchurch): I noted in this issue of the "Radio Record" that Professor Shelley, of Christchurch, speaking with reference to the length of lectures, said that the average person could not listen to a lecture over the wireless for longer than a quarter of an hour, and take it in. I hope this remark will meet the eye of all church ministers, and that they will restrict their sermons to somewhere near that length of time. On Sunday evening there was a sermon that must have gone a full 25 minutes—ten minutes too long to please radio listeners, whatever may have been the effect on the congregation. It is worth while for preachers to cater for their unseen audience more than they do. They should also talk more into the microphone.

Radio in Napier.

I read Dr. Ziele's article in this week's issue with much interest, and if it was not for these howlers radio reception would be very good here now. The Australian stations are nearly all coming in here as loud as Wellington, and last evening 2BL and 2FC were roaring in at 8.30 N.Z.S.T. The children's session was plainly heard from 2BL.

district and also that 2YA will put on orchestral music in its evening sessions. I hope to hear who the station is on 2YA's wave-length.

News from 2YA on Silent Day.

"Listener-in" (Ohakune):—When I suggested a new hour on Wednesday from 2YA, now silent on that day, I saw no reason why this should compel the staff to work seven days weekly, and although I understand little about the running of a broadcasting station, I think if it could be arranged to broadcast the news on that day the extra cost would be far more than balanced by the great benefit to farmers. Your correspondent from Bay of Islands cannot get 2YA in daylight, so he does not want the other listeners to get in on him. Sour grapes, is it not?

2YA's Reception.

F. J. Shanley (Wanganui):—In last week's "Record" you asked for a report of your transmission. With the exception of the "Maori" night and the 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 23rd of this month, 2YA has not been clear; there being quite a blurred effect. There is quite a striking contrast when turning over to 2BL (Sydney), where the signals come through as clear as crystal. I am quite sure that the artists are too near the "micro." We have found that the artist with a smaller voice comes through much clearer. The Symons-Elwood trios come through well, and are a treat. The band items come through well, as they are at the end of the studio (I was through it at the New Year). Mr. Haywood's mandoline solos the first two weeks were very good, but of late it has been a piano solo, with mandoline accompaniment, which is not fair to the artist, who is good on the instrument. This remark applies the same to other artists where the piano is too loud. You will pardon my plain remarks. I like 2YA very well, and it is only with the hope that your broadcast may be even better that these lines are written. [If you get 2BL clearly, is there any chance of your set being overloaded for 2YA?—Ed.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

"G.S." (Dannevirke):—The particulars of the station are so meagre as to render its identification impossible.

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