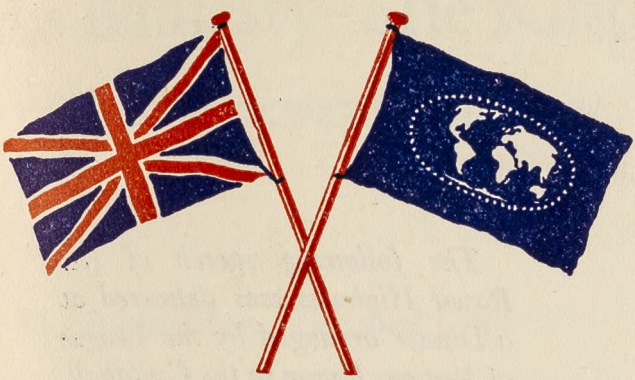

THE PRINCE ON THE LEAGUE AND THE EMPIRE

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION
15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, S.W.1

The following speech of His Royal Highness was delivered at a Dinner arranged by the League of Nations Union in the Guildhall, London, on October 30, 1930.

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His Majesty The King

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30th October, 1930

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It is gratifying to me to know that my Son is with you on such an auspicious occasion when the

presence of distinguished representatives from my Dominions and India is proof that the Empire is united in its devotion to the cause of Peace.

May the efforts of the Union, in co-operation with similar Bodies in other countries, succeed in securing that whole-hearted support of public opinion so vital to the ultimate success of the League itself.

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H.R.H. the Prince of Wales

ON THE EMPIRE AND THE LEAGUE

IT gives me great pleasure to be present at this celebration of our common faith in two great institutions, the British Commonwealth and the League of Nations. We meet at a particularly fitting moment, when the near approach of Armistice Day recalls that awful period, still so vivid to almost all of us who are present this evening, when the British Empire demonstrated to the world two outstanding facts: firstly, its own complete solidarity as the greatest brotherhood the world has ever known, and secondly, its readiness to help in the building of a similar brotherhood among all nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these facts must increase both in reality and in importance. They are interdependent, and they both find expression through the united policy of the British Empire in membership of the League of Nations.

I am well aware that there are still, in all countries, some people who profess to have no belief in the efficacy of the League of Nations to prevent another

devastating world war. I would ask those people to think a little deeper; to reflect, first, that the way to prevent war is not by some sudden and violent action at the eleventh hour, but by the gradual and steady formation of habits of international co-operation and mutual trust; and secondly, to ask themselves, if they mistrust the League, what possible alternative they have to offer for establishing peace and rebuilding world prosperity?

To-night's gathering is in itself one of the most convincing proofs that could be given of the possibility of international co-operation on a very extensive basis. Here is represented one-fourth of the entire human race, comprising men of different races, languages and conditions, but united under the Crown by a common tradition of loyalty. They enjoy complete civil and political liberty; they maintain their separate nationalities and pursue their own methods of development. They have passed beyond the stage at which it is the duty of a nation vehemently to assert its independence. That is now accepted as a matter of course; and there remains the higher and greater duty of co-operation for the good of the whole.

They have solved the problem of disarmament among themselves, for the question of making war against one another has been relegated to the scrap-heap. Differences are settled not by resort to arms; not even by formal arbitration, but by friendly meetings and conversations round a table. Canada, we are all proud to remember, has set an especially great example. Her whole vast frontier facing the United States is devoid of armed force. Ladies and Gentlemen, surely civilisation has by now reached a point at which we can believe that these facts have some meaning. If one-fourth of the human race can thus prove the practicability of a true League of united but independent nations, is it mere idealism to hope that the remaining three-fourths will be able to tread the same path? It is, at any rate, most vital to our own interests that that hope should be fulfilled; for the British Commonwealth has frontiers upon every ocean and every continent and needs not local peace but world peace.

What is the real secret of the unity of the British Commonwealth? It is surely to be found, first, in the full respect of all

members for one another's freedom, and secondly, in a common will to understand one another, to co-operate with one another, and to observe faithfully all mutual obligations.

The nations of the League have had, of course, a much harder problem to face. Unlike us, they have had among them differences of language, conflicts of history, old enmities and mistrusts to overcome. It is here that the work of the Voluntary Societies, like our own League of Nations Union, has proved indispensable. Without their work it would have scarcely been possible to bring about, in nation after nation, the necessary change in the national outlook.

It was recognised by the statesmen who formed the Covenant of the League that to found a mere League of Governments would be to court the failure that has often attended the efforts after permanent peace in the past. A Treaty like the Covenant implied a change not merely in official action but in national habits of thought; it was a Treaty which must be understood and accepted by the peoples themselves. The peoples must be parties to the Treaty. Public opinion must be the

very foundation of the world League if the structure is to have a prospect of permanence. Our own Society, the League of Nations Union, is, I believe, the largest and strongest of all the voluntary societies. Largely through its efforts similar societies have been set on foot in all the principal nations that are members of the League; and, more important still, teaching of the League Covenant and of the principles of international co-operation through the League is now being given in the State Schools of practically all the nations. In education, we are often told, lies the key to the future. But we adults need it, perhaps, as much as children do. The causes of war are manifold. And the education which would build up the spirit of peace in nation after nation must explore many avenues of human activity and thought. The numerous sections of the League of Nations Union's organisation show that the need has been felt of carrying out this educational work in a methodical and businesslike manner. Such work calls for the support of every right-thinking man and woman; and I trust that the people of this country, which has been the pioneer

of so many great and beneficent movements, will realise the urgent importance of doing all in their power to assist the League of Nations Union in the greatest Crusade of all—the Crusade for World Peace.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

GENEVA,
October, 1930.

More than ten years experience of the work of the League of Nations has shown that while support by the Governments of the Member States is essential to the League, a well-informed public opinion is equally required if such support is to be earnest and constant. When a moment of international stress arises, general knowledge as to the value of League machinery and possibilities cannot but prove of the utmost value.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

It has for long been an axiom of British foreign policy that the first of British interests is peace. True we have sometimes sought peace through war, but generations have shown how fallacious was that facile doctrine that the preparation for war was the security for peace. Now we are pursuing a better way. The preparation for war and the securing of peace belong to two different orders of policy. The League of Nations stands for the latter, and it therefore quite naturally has enlisted the active support of all members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The task of building up a firm structure of world peace can only be accomplished by long and patient effort. It will not be completed until the nations have forgotten the misunderstandings that now divide them, until the simple folk of every land look across their frontiers with confidence and trust towards their neighbours on the other side. Since that task is long and difficult, since it must tax to the utmost the efforts of the enlightened peoples of the world, every man and woman of goodwill must wish success to those who labour to help it forward—those in short, of this League of Nations Union, who, in accordance with its Royal Charter, prepare dull or doubting opinion for each progressive step. In that spirit I send my warmest greetings to your dinner to-night.

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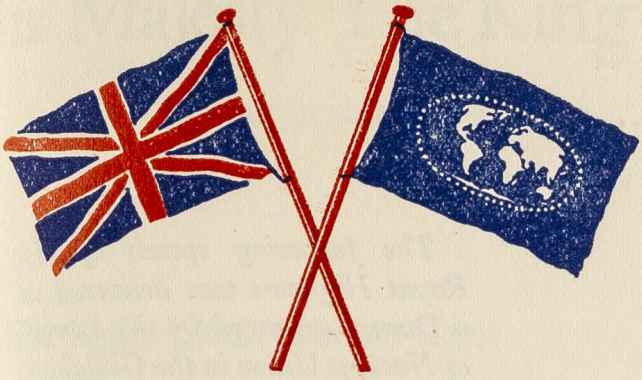
Printed at the Pelican Press, 2 Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4



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J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.
October 30, 1930.

A GREAT GATHERING

When in November, 1929, the Lord Mayor of London, speaking at a League of Nations Union Dinner in the Guildhall, with General Smuts as chief speaker, described it as perhaps the most remarkable function that had ever taken place within those ancient walls he was perhaps exaggerating a little. Certainly Sir William Waterlow himself, attending another League Dinner in October, 1930, at the close of his term of office, as he had attended the former one at the beginning of it, would have been the first to recognise that the second occasion was even more notable than the first.

The League of Nations Union has made many impressive appeals to public opinion—in the Albert Hall, in demonstrations in Hyde Park, in great provincial centres up and down the country; His Majesty the King has more than once given his blessing to its efforts; but never before has it rallied to the League such support as was freely extended by the leaders of the political, intellectual, industrial and commercial life of the country who gathered at the Guildhall on October 30, 1930, or sent messages of encouragement and goodwill. The dinner was given in joint honour of the delegates to the Imperial Conference, then in session, and the delegates, British and Imperial, to the recent League of Nations Assembly. Every speaker, and the authors of the various messages of greeting, spoke with some special authority and

for thousands or millions of his fellow-citizens besides himself. The King sent an unequivocal declaration of the devotion of the Empire to the cause of peace, supplemented appropriately and most valuably by an expression of goodwill towards the League of Nations Union. The Prime Minister, as head of His Majesty's Government, pledged the support of all members of the British Commonwealth to the League of Nations, adding that every man and woman of goodwill must wish success to those who labour to help the League forward—'those, in short, of this League of Nations Union.' From Geneva Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, sent a message emphasising the essential dependence of the League itself on the creation of an instructed public opinion by such bodies as the League of Nations Union in every country.

Such was the contribution of the absent. Present at the principal table, running the whole length of the historic hall, were the Prince of Wales, thus honouring for the first time a gathering in honour of the League; Lord Cecil, presiding in the regretted absence of Lord Grey through illness, and representing the survivors, still relatively numerous, of the band of men who under President Wilson's chairmanship drafted the League Covenant at Paris in 1919; the Lord Mayor of London, standing for the wealth and dignity and the immemorial history of that great city that has

guarded English freedom faithfully through the centuries and lives to-day as the heart of a world-wide Empire; the Prime Minister of the senior Dominion and the spokesman, on this occasion, for every self-governing unit in the Commonwealth; the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Mr. J. H. Thomas, representing the Government of the day; Sir Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Minister in the former administration and qualified by a fuller experience than any other holder of that office before or since to speak of the League of Nations from personal knowledge as a living and effective force in the post-war world.

It was in that stately setting, under Gog and Magog's approving gaze, that Lord Cecil rose to move the loyal toasts. With them he coupled particularly the name of the Prince of Wales, who by his presence there that night was, said the speaker, setting to his credit ' what may well turn out not to be the least of the many great public services he has rendered to his country.' Linking effectively the interest of the British Commonwealth and the interest of the League of Nations, Lord Cecil declared that peace was the common concern of both. ' No country in the world,' he affirmed, ' has given as much to freedom as we have; no country in the world has more to gain from peace and tranquillity than we have.' His own conviction, he added, based on constant travel up and down England and Scotland, was that the overwhelming mass of the citizens of the country

was in favour of the utmost support being given to the League of Nations, and with long personal experience of the League itself he found that institution every year stronger, better established, and more capable of discharging the great duties laid upon it. Lord Cecil ended on the same note he had struck in his impressive speech on the closing day of the League Assembly at Geneva, a note of warning that peace was one of those blessings that could only be bought at a price, to be won by endeavour and it might be with sacrifice, for peace was not merely the absence of war, but ' an active, definite and positive frame of mind in the nations that can only be achieved by the utmost efforts of them all, led, as I hope and believe, by the nations of the British Commonwealth of the British Empire.'

The speech of the Prince of Wales, which followed immediately, is not to be summarised. It must be read in full as it was delivered, for as a considered utterance of the heir to the Throne on the League of Nations, and the first of its kind, it has far more than mere transitory value. The Prince is a master of easy but effective enunciation. Every word was borne clearly across the air to listeners in a score or more of countries, and as soon as the speech was finished a message came speeding beneath the Atlantic from an American listener conveying an assurance of the perfection of the reception there.

[*The Prince's speech is printed in full on pages* 5 *to* 10 *above.*]

As the Secretary of State for the Dominions observed, the most popular passage in his speech was the announcement he was able to make that a donation of £5,000 (by Sir Louis Baron) was the first response to the Prince's appeal for support of the League of Nations Union. The Dominions Secretary, as was fitting, dwelt on the record of the British Commonwealth of Nations as an example of the free and harmonious co-operation of States with diverse interests but a single aim. Nobody, he claimed, gave a better lead to the world in the pursuit and practice of peace, that peace which would only be assured when the peoples of the world realised that war never pays, that there is no victor in war, but only suffering for all alike.

The speech of the Prime Minister of Canada, was awaited with particular interest. Only elected to office a few weeks before, Mr. Bennett had never been able to visit Geneva, and in Great Britain, at any rate, there was considerable speculation as to whether his Conservative administration would give the same unfailing support to the League as its Liberal predecessor. Any misgivings on that point were soon dispelled. The Canadian Premier in the first sixty seconds of his speech set his attitude towards the League beyond doubt or cavil. The Overseas Governments, he observed, had cause to be proud of the Covenant of the League by reason of the part Dominion Premiers had taken in framing it, and, added

Mr. Bennett, ' it must be for all time a matter for pride to every citizen of our Empire that one who a few short years ago was in arms against this Empire took so large a part in framing the Covenant—I need hardly mention the name of General Smuts.'

After a tribute to the work Lord Cecil had done for peace the Canadian Prime Minister turned to disarmament, which he described as the greatest work in which the League is now engaged. The reduction of armies, he said, was the only assurance or guarantee of any permanent peace among the peoples of the world. The world, he recognised, must be policed, order and the rule and reign of law must be maintained. A police force adequate to ensure that was, no doubt, necessary. ' But,' he added, on a necessary warning note, ' we must see to it that the force does not transcend the necessities of the occasion and be made a mere excuse for increasing armaments.' We must, insisted Mr. Bennett, declare our belief as openly as possible in disarmament, combining the necessary mutual confidence with adequate examination to see that that confidence was not misplaced. The Canadian Premier's closing sentence was an expression of ' our faith, confidence and belief in the capacity of this great League of Nations to secure peace, tranquillity and happiness, that we may be able to devote our time, energy and intellects to the solution of those great problems that will make for the eternal peace, security and happiness of mankind.'

Sir Austen Chamberlain, to whom the toast of the League of Nations had been entrusted, had, as Lord Cecil had mentioned earlier in the evening, set at Geneva the invaluable precedent of the regular attendance of the Foreign Minister of a Great Power at Council meetings and Assemblies of the League. Sir Austen's declaration of faith in the League was unqualified. ' If any man or woman,' he declared on the basis of his four years' experience, ' thinks that the League does not count or is a negligible factor in world politics; if anyone doubts that it is already a great force and capable of becoming a greater, he or she should go to Geneva and listen to the discussions that there take place, note the conversations as well as the public speeches which do so much to smooth away difficulties, to create agreement and to find, with the aid of that great factor, time, a solution to the difficulties which at first approach seem insoluble.'

Characteristically anxious to avoid any overstatement Sir Austen Chamberlain dwelt more specifically on the part the League can play in averting war. ' The League,' he conceded, ' is no guarantee against war. It will be long before that can be claimed for it, if, indeed, that claim will ever be made. But the League is already an immense obstacle to war, an immense assistance to men of goodwill who do not wish us to resort to war, and it is our business to cultivate that spirit of mind in international relationships which leads more surely than

any sanctions, or any punishments against the wrong-doer, to common co-operation instead of international strife and to concord and peace instead of to war.'

With Sir Austen's closing words, ' the League of Nations. May it flourish and grow in strength and prosperity,' this brief record of an occasion, memorable alike in the annals of the City of London and of the League of Nations Union, may fitly end.

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