

President's Speech to the Senate

(Continued from page 8.)

opportunity to throw safeguards about the rights of racial, national and religious minorities by solemn international covenant; an opportunity to limit and regulate military establishments where they were most likely to be mischievous; an opportunity to effect a complete and systematic internationalization of waterways and railways which were necessary to the free economic life of more than one nation, and to clear many of the normal channels of commerce of unfair obstructions of law or of privilege; and the very welcome opportunity to secure for labor the concerted protection of definite international pledges of principle and practice.

These were not tasks which the conference looked about it to find and went out of its way to perform. They were inseparable from the settlements of peace. They were thrust upon it by circumstances which could not be overlooked. The war had created them. In all quarters of the world old established relationships had been disturbed or broken and affairs were at loose ends, needing to be mended or united again, but could not be made what they were before. They had to be set right by applying some uniform principle of justice or enlightened expediency. And they could not be adjusted by merely prescribing in a treaty what should be done. New states were to be set up which could not hope to live through their first period of weakness without assured support by the great nations that had consented to their creation and won for them their independence. Ill-governed colonies

could not be put in the hands of governments which were to act as trustees for their people and not as masters if there was to be no common authority among the nations to which they were to be responsible in the execution of their trusts. Future international conventions with regard to the control of waterways, with regard to illicit traffic of many kinds, in arms or in deadly drugs, or with regard to the adjustments of many varying international administrative arrangements could not be assured if the treaty were to provide no permanent common international agency, if its execution in such matters were to be left to the slow and uncertain processes of co-operation by ordinary methods of negotiation. If the peace conference itself was to be the end of co-operative authority and common counsel among the governments to which the world was looking to enforce justice and give pledges of an enduring settlement, regions like the Saar basin could not be put under a temporary administrative regime which did not involve a transfer of political connections by popular vote to be taken at a distant date; no free city like Danzig could be created which was under elaborate international guarantees to accept exceptional obligations with regard to the use of its ports and exceptional relations with a state of which it was not to form a part; properly safeguarded plebiscites could not provide for where populations were at some future date to make choice what sovereignty they would live under; no certain and uniform method of arbitration could be secured for the settlement of anticipated difficulties of final decision with regards of many matters dealt with in the treaty itself; the long-continued supervision of the task of reparation which Germany was to undertake to complete within the next generation might entirely break down; the reconsideration and revision of administrative arrangements and restrictions which the treaty prescribed but which it was recognized might not prove of lasting advantage or entirely fair if too long enforced would be rather impracticable. The promises governments were making to one another about the way in which labor was to be dealt with, by law not only, but in fact as well, would remain a mere human thesis if there was to be no common tribunal of opinion and judgment to which liberal statesmen could resort for the influences which alone might secure their redemption. A league of free nations had become a practical necessity. Examine the treaty of peace and you will find that everywhere throughout its manifold provisions its framers have felt obliged to turn to the League of Nations as an indispensable instrumentality for the maintenance of the new order it has been their purpose to set up in the world—the world of civilized men.

AGREED LEAGUE MUST BE FORMED

That there should be a League of Nations to steady the counsels and maintain the peaceful understandings of the world, to make, not treaties alone, but the accepted principles of international law as well, the actual rule of conduct among the governments of the world, had been one of the agreements accepted from the first as the basis of peace with the central powers. The statesmen of all the belligerent countries were agreed that such a league must be created to sustain the settlements that were to be effected. But at first I think there was a feeling among some of them that while it must be attempted, the formation of such a league was perhaps a counsel of per-

fection which practical men, long experienced in the world of affairs, must agree to very cautiously and with many misgivings. It was only as the difficult work of arranging an all but universal adjustment of the world's affairs advanced from day to day, from one stage of conference to another that it became evident to them that what they were seeking would be little more than something written upon paper, to be interpreted and applied by such methods as the changes of politics might make available if they did not provide a means of common counsel which all were obliged to accept, a common authority whose decisions would be recognized as decisions which all must respect.

ALL CONVERTED TO LEAGUE

And so the most practical, the most skeptical among them turned more and more to the league as the authority through which international action was to be secured, the authority without which, as they had come to see it, it would be difficult to give assured effect either to this treaty or to any other international understanding upon which they were to depend for the maintenance of peace. The fact that the covenant of the league was the first substantive part of the treaty to be worked out and agreed upon, while all else was in solution, helped to make the formu-

lation of the rest easier. The conference was, after all not to be ephemeral. The concert of nations was to continue, under a definite covenant which had been agreed upon and which all were convinced was workable. They could go forward with confidence to make arrangements intended to be permanent. The most practical of the conferees were at last the most ready to refer to the League of Nations the superintendence of all interests which did not admit of immediate determination of all administrative problems which were to require a continuing oversight. What had seemed a counsel of perfection had come to seem a plain counsel of necessity. The League of Nations was the practical statesman's hope of success in many of the most difficult things he was attempting.

PEOPLE KNOW THEY HAVE BEEN LIED TO

And it had validated itself in the thought of every member of the conference as something much bigger, much greater every way than a mere instrument for carrying out the provisions of a particular treaty. It was unanimously recognized that all the peoples of the world demanded of the conference that it should create such a continuing concert of free nations as would make wars of aggression and spoliation such as this that has just ended forever im-

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