The Nations Must Eventually Come Back to Equality in Armament—but It Is The Hope of The Federation of League of Nations Societies That the World War Victors Will Disarm to the Level of the Vanquished Instead of Vice Versa, Says This British Statesman

By Viscount Cecil of Chelwood

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NE morning newsmen the delegates to the Twenty-first Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva will find in the official journal of the Assembly that the important resolutions of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies are a considerable proving of American opinion, and it is a very important indication of the direction in which public opinion on this subject is moving.

When I say public opinion, I am, of course, fully aware of the fact that in many countries, the League of Nations Societies have not the large number of adherents which they have, for instance, in my own country. The reason is obvious. "But the delegates to the Federation's recent meeting in New York, who were, generally speaking, men of weight in their countries who represented the general tenor of modern opinion, and whose statements are more likely to be heeded in their countries than are those of Congressmen, who do not have the same weight in their communities, are fully aware of the vital importance of these resolutions.

Withdrawal or Rearm

What, then, are the proposals of this statement? In the first place, we say that the Conference must continue to enact a definite disarmament treaty, the first, as it must be, of a series of such treaties. In support in this respect, we give several obvious and imperative reasons: "The definite unconditional pledge given by the Governments of the states, under Article 8 of the Covenant;" the formal promise which M. Clemenceau gave on the Allied platform that "this is the only road to peace, to the states disarmed under the treaties that the exceptional regime applied to must be replaced by a stepping stone to general abandonment of all arms," the evil effects of arms races, the situations, the expenditures that cannot be repudiated, the danger to the United States and the United States. We call for the international organization of the League of Nations, in order to preserve the international order of nations, and to establish the League of Nations, a union of which can be maintained without armed intervention, while the other cannot? Such a state of things is contradictory to the fundamental conception of the League, and can be tolerated only as a transitional measure while the League disarmament schemes are being worked out. The proposals themselves, the first step towards disarmament, must be taken at the conference next year.

The situation is such that it is evident that the League of Nations, the League of Nations of the United States, is the only road to peace, to the states disarmed under the treaties, but by the proportionate reduction of those of other states.

In any case, the Federation considers that the principle of limitation and reduction of armaments should be the same for all states, and, consequently, that:

1. Each state should be limited to the amount budgeted for its national, army and air force.
2. The prohibition of certain material, naval, land, or air, enjoined in the treaties should apply to all states signatories to the convention.

3. The observance of the obligations thus contracted by the states should be insured by a permanent disarmament commission established at the seat of the League of Nations and exercising its control equally over all nations.

Each of these paragraphs deserves a word of comment.

By the first the broad principle of equality is laid down. It is declared that no special regime in the matter of disarmament can be indefinitely maintained for particular states. People who met that appeal must appeal more than a platitudinous. Apart from all other considerations, how is it possible to have two classes of members of the League of Nations, one of which can be trusted with unlimited armaments, while the other cannot? Such a state of things is contradictory to the fundamental conception of the League, and can be tolerated only as a transitional measure while the League disarmament schemes are being worked out. The proposals themselves, the first step towards disarmament, must be taken at the conference next year.

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