

respect is scarcely compatible with one of the primary objects of the Protocol—viz., Disarmament. The portions of the Covenant, therefore, dealing with the imposition of sanctions appear to us to be the least valuable for the general purposes of the Covenant, and an extension of these provisions, such as is contemplated in the Protocol, the least profitable avenue of exploration towards improvement.

The expressed intention of the framers of the Protocol to exclude from the new system of pacific settlement any disputes which may arise regarding existing territorial divisions appears to us to detract considerably from the value of the instrument. Many existing frontiers were fixed by Treaties negotiated before the shadow of the Great War had receded and before the passions which the War aroused had subsided. The passage of years may prove these delimitations to be convenient and equitable; on the other hand, it may in time become apparent that present boundaries are in some cases unsuitable and provocative of ill-will. We realize that the stability of the Continent of Europe, and the prevention of a renewed international race in armaments must depend largely on the extent to which the existing apprehensions of nations, whether well or ill-founded, regarding possible interference with their territorial integrity can be allayed. As long, however, as some of the more powerful States refrain from participation in the League of Nations the feeling of uneasiness and distrust will continue. The continued absence of certain of these States from the Councils of the League is in some degree admittedly attributable to their unwillingness to be called upon to take active measures to maintain for all time existing frontiers even though these should prove to have been inequitably drawn. We fear that the conclusion of an agreement which must to some extent appear to these Nations to partake of the nature of an alliance confined to States Members of the League emphasizing by implication the immutability of these frontiers and imposing upon Members additional obligations, particularly by way of participation in disputes and in sanctions, is not calculated to induce them to accept the responsibilities of membership and is, therefore, likely to hinder rather than further the progress of world pacification and disarmament.

The Irish Free State, because of its geographical position, because its armed forces have been reduced to the minimum requisite for the maintenance of internal order, and because of its Constitution, which provides that, except in case of invasion, it can only be committed to participation in war with the consent of the Oireachtas, cannot be regarded as a material factor in the enforcement of sanctions. Consequently, the foregoing observations on the Protocol are not affected by any considerations especially affecting the Irish Free State, and are dictated solely by our genuine desire that the League of Nations should realize the aspirations of its founders by uniting all nations in the common interest of world peace.

If we might express an opinion upon the measures by which these aspirations may best be realized, and naturally we do so with the utmost diffidence, we would suggest that the solution is to be found not in an endeavour to close some of the fissures in the Covenant by elaborate definition or drastic sanction, but rather in an effort to enhance the moral influence of international conscience. An extension of the principle of arbitration which serves to define and enunciate international judgment, and which relies in the last resort on the moral pressure of world opinion and not upon the application of material sanctions, appears to us to be the most effective feasible means of attaining, at least in a large measure, the objects which the Protocol has in view.

The League of Nations has justified its existence even if account is taken only of the immense scheme of social progress which it has initiated. The reconstruction of countries devastated by the Great War which has been accomplished under its aegis, the succour which has, through its machinery, been afforded to hundreds of thousands rendered homeless by international calamity, and the measures which have been adopted for the suppression of traffic in arms and of vice are achievements of which it may justly be proud.

It is not without significance that in this section of the activities of the League it has had the active co-operation and support of States which have not hitherto found it possible to accept obligations of membership, and perhaps it may not be too much to hope that the opportunities thus afforded for intercourse between member and non-member States may by the further development of these activities be instrumental in allaying the apprehensions and in removing the prejudices which hinder the full co-operation of those States in the efforts of the League for the maintenance of international peace.

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NOTE.—Copy sent to Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and Newfoundland, by despatch, 2nd July, 1925.