

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PROTOCOL.

From PROFESSOR H. DARNLEY NAYLOR.—I regret that Mr. Hamilton considered my first letter to have "a strong flavour of partyism." The League of Nations Union knows no party. I should have felt and said exactly the same, no matter who had chanced to be Prime Minister. The burden of my first letter, as of my second, was that the Prime Minister had not laid before Parliament proposals of the highest importance, although Australian delegates had approved them as worthy of acceptance, and although one of these delegates, Sir Littleton Groom, was Chairman of the legal committee which drew up the proposals. A layman can hardly help feeling that unless the proposals were utterly futile (in which case Sir Littleton Groom should not have voted in their favour) the refusal to consider them in Parliament renders farcical anything done by our representatives at Geneva. Nothing, I repeat, could give greater satisfaction to enemies of the League than the knowledge that it was becoming a practice for Governments to ignore unanimous recommendations of the assembly. The right to discuss before decision—here is the whole point. No one says that the Prime Minister should have accepted the protocol. Acceptance without reference to Parliament, no less than rejection, would have laid him open to justifiable criticism. Mr. Hamilton has entered upon a discussion of the protocol itself. But such discussion is relevant only if I had claimed that the Prime Minister ought to have accepted the protocol. What I do claim is that he ought to have permitted Parliamentary discussion before telling the British Government that Australia rejected the Geneva proposal. Mr. Hamilton is not satisfied with my "nebulous distinguished publicists" who see no danger of the Empire (I apologise for saying British Navy) being called upon to act as the world's policeman. I refer him to such well-known names as Sir Frederick Pollock, Professor Gilbert Murray, Dr. Morison (Professor of American History at Oxford), Mr. G. N. Barnes, Sir Robert Borden, Sir Francis Bell, and Professor Noel Baker. As to his quotation from The Weekly Times, the topics discussed are better suited for the judgment of statesmen and lawyers than of naval and military experts. But even a military expert can hold exactly opposite views, as is shown by a letter from Major J. W. Hills in the same number of The Weekly Times (Feb. 26, p. 257). Let me quote a few lines:—"You (i.e. the editor) say that these criticisms (i.e., of the subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence) are wide and destructive. They are. They are so wide that they could be used against any international arrangement whatever designed to provide arbitration, security, and disarmament, and so destructive that they would render any such arrangement for ever impossible. No doubt that distinguished body is justified in putting the case from one side only, and at its worst. But their report cannot be regarded as a final weighing of merits against disadvantages." Last, Mr. Hamilton would have the League of Nations "direct its attention to checking the growth of Communism." Every one should know that the League of Nations cannot interfere with the internal politics of any member. If it did it would quickly meet with the fate that befell the Holy Alliance. I desire to thank The Register for its leading article on this topic. Any supporter of the League must feel satisfaction that you have discussed it at all. I venture, however, to differ from you on one point. You justify the Prime Minister's summary rejection of the protocol by saying that "the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee was rejected by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in an even more summary fashion." But surely there is no parallel. The Treaty of Mutual Guarantee had not been unanimously adopted by the assembly, the protocol had. I am in agreement with your view that Geneva has not allowed sufficient time for consideration and discussion; but this is only another good reason for complaining of the Prime Minister's hasty action. Had he said "We are not in a position as yet to accept or reject the Geneva proposals," all reasonable citizens would have applauded his attitude.

A KING'S PEACE PLAN

(By Professor Coleman Phillipson)

In my last article I gave an outline of the noteworthy peace project of William Penn, and I pointed out that he acknowledged his indebtedness to the "Grand Design" of Henry IV. of France. It will be of interest, therefore, to look at the great French King's plan for setting in order the sorely distracted Europe, and so paving the way for the peace of the world.

In these days we cannot be too familiar with the famous peace schemes that have been propounded in the past. History never repeats itself exactly, but the ideas, efforts, and events of the past throw a flood of light on the conceptions, strivings, and movements of the present.

The sixteenth century witnessed the disintegration of mediaeval Europe, and the following century, thanks chiefly to the Reformation, saw a recasting of its religious and political ideas, and a reconstruction of its entire political casting of its religious and political system on a territorial basis subject to the dominion of absolute monarchy. At this time France held the lead in European affairs and was bitterly opposed to Germanic pretensions.

It was an age of unconscionable scheming, treacheries, and wars. Religious conflicts were mixed up with faction hostilities. In the midst of the sanguinary and devastating Thirty Years' War the great work of Grotius on the law of war and peace was published (1625) as a protest against the lawlessness and barbarism of belligerents. Soon after (about 1638) came to light the "Grand Design," put together by the Duc de Sully, who attributed it to his sovereign. The whole of the progressive legislation and remarkable reforms effected in France during the reign of Henry were due almost exclusively to the King and his great minister, Sully.

Society of States

The aim of the Design was the establishment of a Christian Republic or Commonwealth of States in Europe. This could not be attained unless first of all certain political and territorial conditions were modified in such a way as to mitigate the constant jealousy, embitterment, and enmity between several European countries. That is to say, such a degree of international equality was to be secured as to bring about the balance of power and minimise its disturbance.

After this necessary readjustment there would be 15 States in all—six hereditary monarchies, France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden, Lombardy; five elective sovereignties, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papacy, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia; and four republics, Venice, Italy, Switzerland, and the Dutch Republic.

It is to be noted that the Russians and the Turks were excluded from this European Commonwealth. The religion and origin of the Turks made them profoundly hostile to the rest, while the Russians, partly pagan and generally unenlightened, were not yet fitted for membership. In view of the recent efforts made to solve the inveterate Near East problem it is specially interesting to find that in Sully's Design the Turks were to be given one year in which to elect between the adoption of the Christian religion and removal from the European circle.

Councils of this Confederation

The general interests of this Grand Confederation and the external relationships of its members were to be regulated by a General Council and by six special councils. The General Council, a Senate, was to comprise 60 deputies appointed for three years, on a representation basis proportionate to the political importance of the various States. The procedure and details of organisation would be decided by the votes of the representatives. The meetings might be held, for reasons of general convenience, in one of the central European cities.

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The six local or minor councils concerned with the particular affairs of States situated within a certain radius or circle were to meet at Danzig, Nuremberg, Vienna, Bologna, Constantine, and in one of the towns agreed upon by England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. The General Council would be a Court of Appeal in case of disputed or unsatisfactory decision reached by the special councils.

The constant efforts of all the councils were to be directed to the following great objects—to prevent war between members; to prevent conquests, unjustifiable interventions and encroachments attempted by the more powerful and ambitious States; to ensure in each State such a regime as will prevent tyranny of the ruler and discontent and revolts of the subjects—for civil wars often promote international conflicts; to eradicate the source of religious wars, either foreign, by expelling the Turks from Europe; or internal, by establishing the most complete tolerance for all Roman Catholic and Protestant religions—religious liberty for all peoples and sections of peoples would greatly conduce to the realisation of general and durable peace; and lastly, to establish freedom of trade.

A Common Army and Navy

For the defence of the European Commonwealth and of all its members and for the purpose of enforcing obedience of the Council's laws, regulations, and decisions, a common army and a common navy were to be organised. The General Council would determine the quota for each State to contribute, and the amount of financial support necessary to maintain such forces. In the 'Grand Design' various suggestions are made relative to the magnitude of the armament, and to the proportionate contributions.

In one place the author suggested that there should be altogether about 270,000 infantry, 50,000 cavalry, 200 guns, and a fleet of 120 ships; the largest quota should be supplied by the Emperor and the Germanic States, while France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden, and Poland were to contribute equally.

It must be added that according to the private papers and instructions of Henry IV., one of his main objects was the reduction of the House of Austria—for the Hapsburgs were then and long continued to be a sinister factor in European politics.

MIGRANTS OF QUALITY

Steady Stream Best

COMPARISON WITH CANADA

(By Dr. H. Heaton)

Ever since about 2000 B.C. pessimists have been complaining that mankind is going to the dogs. And ever since Australia began to move ahead voices have been raised to assert (a) that we are not growing quickly enough and (b) that we are "not getting the right sort of immigrant."

The apparent slow rate of growth of our population, the vast spaces of unoccupied land, the great "potentialities," and the need for a "broad, comprehensive, scientific, ambitious, carefully planned, thoroughly conducted, skilfully managed, and lavishly financed" new scheme of migration is the pet theme of every Australian Cabinet Minister or Agent-General when he gets alongside a wingglass or lemonade tumbler at a London dinner.

Like calls to like, and I suspect that when the Secretary of State for the Colonies sees in his diary that he has to speak at a banquet to some Australian he rings his bell and asks for the file containing the two or three stock-prepared speeches used at such meals. Then in the taxi he memorises the headings:—Twenty-five times as large as United Kingdom—Cook, Captain, not Joe—Anzac Gallipoli—Less than two people to square mile—Sun never sets—Southern Cross—Glories of past naught to growth ahead—Government will give sympathetic consideration—Loan, yes certainly—See streams hundreds of thousands a year—We'll provide money; yes, at 4 per cent (Mustn't call them Colonies)—suggest future capital of Empire at Canberra, bad; sure to go down well.

THE PROTOCOL.

From W. A. HAMILTON.—The greatly improved tone of Professor H. Darnley Naylor's last letter creates a somewhat different atmosphere in which to discuss this subject. But I cannot agree with the professor when he says that "the real question is not the merits or demerits of the protocol, but the summary treatment it has received." With due respect, I urge that the merits and demerits of the protocol are the very point and essence of the argument. By his condemnation of Mr. Bruce's action in rejecting the protocol and by other arguments, the learned professor has proclaimed himself an out and out supporter of the document as it stands, and he even goes so far (in his first letter) as to say "Nothing can give greater pleasure to the enemies of the league, and they are many—financiers who fatten on threats of war and on war itself; big game hunters eager for adventure, no matter who pays for it; ghoulish cooks who (to use their own silly simile) are going to make that omelette, if 9,000,000 eggs are broken in the process. I cannot believe that Mr. Bruce has joined this band whose music is not the voice of God, but of His enemy!" Such language cannot be excused by the categorical repetition of the grounds of the professor's protest against the Prime Minister's action, which are quite tame by comparison. Moreover, the whole of the first letter is tinged with a strong flavor of partyism which is highly objectionable in the discussion of this question. Now the professor plaintively asks "If we are forbidden to make suggestions to a Prime Minister what's a democracy for?" There is no reason at all why even the humblest citizen should not approach the Prime Minister with a suggestion, and I venture to say that he would be assured of a respectful hearing from Mr. Bruce, but it can hardly be expected that the latter's friends can remain quiescent, and take everything like dumb dogs when Mr. Bruce is publicly suspected of "having joined a band whose music is not the voice of God, but of His enemy." The professor also says that my contention that under the protocol the British fleet (I said Empire) will be called upon "to act as the world's policeman, and pay the cost of it also," is not valid in the eyes of distinguished publicists who have studied the protocol from every angle." The following quotation (which I had not read when I wrote my first letter) from a recent issue of the London "Weekly Times," not only bears out my argument, but goes very much further in that direction:—

Military Criticism.—The criticism of the protocol in the Committee of Imperial Defence has been wide and destructive. The naval and military experts are understood to have raised the following objections:—

- (1) That the protocol, if left as it stands, makes an unlimited claim on our resources, because the League may request action by British naval and military forces in widely scattered areas without notice and to an unlimited extent. At present Great Britain is singularly free of warlike commitments; her only obligation of this kind is that imposed in connection with the neutralised zone in the Rhineland by Articles 42, 43 and 44 of the Treaty of Versailles.
- (2) That the protocol would therefore prevent the reasonable performance by the war departments of their duty to the country, which is to develop plans of defence in certain foreseen emergencies.
- (3) That the protocol in its present form gives an advantage in time of war to an unscrupulous aggressor over an adversary who desires to abide by the cumbersome peace machinery provided in the document.
- (4) That the provisions of the protocol have a decided tendency towards the limitation of the rights of the national commanders, Governments and Parliaments over their own resources. It has been pointed out that the protocol omits to mention the rights of national representative assemblies altogether.

It is also urged that the protocol, far from contributing practically to the abolition of war, directly recognises war as an essential instrument in international relations and actually encourages it, in the case, for instance, of a State which may desire to remain neutral and may be ordered to make war on another State, closely united to it perhaps not only by the ties of friendship, but even by political and national ties, as those which bind Great Britain and the Dominions.

I hope it will not be disputed that such a highly important body as the Committee of Imperial Defence is more competent to give judgment on this feature of the question than the nebulous "distinguished publicists" so trustfully quoted by Professor Naylor. From the above and many other reasons there can be no doubt that Mr. Bruce was amply justified in rejecting the protocol. If ever a great national question called for delay surely this one is shouting those things from the house tops. The League of Nations will not go out of existence because its latest attempt to secure world peace has been rejected by Great Britain and her Dominions. The very fact that there is a League of Nations counts for something and among other things it might well direct its attention to checking the growth of the outrageous doctrines of socialisation of industry, otherwise communism. Curiously enough it is mostly the Socialists and Communists who are the most ardent supporters of the protocol for the abolition of war, and at the same time they (or at least the Communists) are constantly advocating "the class war." This, according to Lenin or Trotsky, means "heavy civil war."

Dr. Cilento, Director of Public Health, at Rabaul, left yesterday by the Melbourne express on his way to Rabaul. Dr. Cilento was formerly Director of the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Townsville, and was sent to New Guinea to organise the health department, and to furnish a report.

STRAIT TIMES

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