

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS¹

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All living organisms, no matter how minute or insignificant, when examined through the microscope, appear enormous, intricate, and extraordinarily active. Similarly, the world at large, when considered through the microscope of contemporary analysis, has no doubt, at all historical periods, struck its immediate witnesses as being infinitely complex and eventful. Is it, then, a mere delusion if the flow of recent and current happenings impresses us as being exceptionally uneven and rapid in its course, as resembling indeed a swollen Alpine torrent at the melting of the snow in the spring?

I believe not. I believe that, even viewed in the perspective of centuries, the last ten years will be characterized by the future historian as an epoch of extraordinarily numerous and radical changes.

To consider the world in its political aspects only, what previous decade has witnessed as many momentous events as the last? The final, decisive struggle and the end of the greatest war that has ever taken place. In Europe alone, the crumbling of four of the most powerful monarchies. The setting up or resurrection of seven or eight new or reborn sovereign entities. The spread of the republican principle from three to fifteen states. The establishment of a professedly communistic régime over a population of more than a hundred million human beings at one end of the continent and the setting up of several more or less absolute dictatorships at the other. Finally, and leaving aside many minor events which in less extraordinary times would have loomed uncommonly large on the political horizon, such as state bankruptcies and revolutions, the foundation of the first effective, free, coöperative, and resolutely pacific League of Nations the world has ever seen.

¹ An address delivered before the Geneva Institute of International Relations on August 8, 1927.

No wonder, then, that in this tempestuously changing world the League of Nations should itself have undergone such modifications in its structure and in its functions that, less than eight years after its legal birth, one should already think of speaking of its evolution. The fact of its evolution is in itself both encouraging and disquieting for the friends of peace.

It is encouraging as a proof of reality and vitality. In the rough political weather of the last ten years, only those ships have invariably kept on an even keel which have remained in port. The League has been battered about because it has sailed boldly out into the open sea. Even if it has not always succeeded in mastering the waves—even if it has sometimes been prevented from completing its trip and from delivering its cargo—it has at least proved tolerably seaworthy. That is an achievement which none could have foretold with certainty ten years ago.

On the other hand, the rhythm of growth and change in the League may also inspire some misgivings. It must, at any rate, call for very great vigilance. If stability is not an ideal, excessive instability is neither a sign of health nor a condition of success. To live fast is not necessarily to live long; a tempestuous youth does not always guarantee a fruitful manhood nor a happy old age.

Let us therefore consider the evolution of the League with an open mind, both hopeful and critical, seeking only to discover the truth and thereby avoiding the double danger of unjustified optimism and of undue despondency.

The League of Nations began to evolve even before it was truly born. This first evolution we studied last year, when considering the League as an historical fact.² We then noted that none of the conceptions of its principal founders had been completely realized either in the Covenant, to the drafting of which they had contributed, or still less in the League as it had grown out of the Covenant in the first six years of its existence.

The League, as it is today, is neither exactly the Wilsonian League to guarantee a just peace, nor the League of Léon Bourgeois to maintain a secure peace against, and at the expense of,

² See my paper published under this title in *The Problems of Peace* (London, 1927), pp. 18-49, and reprinted in the June, 1927, number of *International Conciliation*.

the vanquished, nor the League to which General Smuts proposed to assign the duty of administering large parts of Europe, nor even, although more nearly, the Cecilian League to prevent the sudden outbreak of war. We noted last year that it was exactly none of these things, that it was really both something less and something more. It was, we found, not so much a League to enforce peace as an international organization to promote voluntary coöperation, public discussion, and pacific negotiations among its members.

Today we would examine somewhat more closely the recent development of this organization. We propose to note the changes it has undergone, first in its structure, and afterwards in some of its principal functions.

THE MEMBERS

Of the structure of the League, by far the most fundamental feature is, of course, its membership. One may differ, and publicists have differed, as to which is the most important organ of the League—the Council, the Assembly, the Secretariat, the Court, or the International Labor Organization. All must agree, however, that the most vital organs of the League of Nations are, as its name indicates but as is too often forgotten, the nations which compose the League. Therefore by far the most significant changes which have taken place in the structure of the League are the fourteen admissions and the three resignations which have occurred since its foundation.

When the Covenant was adopted by the Peace Conference of Paris on April 28, 1919, its Annex provided that forty-five states might belong to the League as original members. Of these, thirty-two, the victorious belligerents, were to join as signatories of the treaty of Versailles, and thirteen, former neutrals, were "invited to accede to the Covenant." Of the thirty-two victors, twenty-eight effectually joined by ratifying the treaty of Versailles; one, China, who refused to take this step, by ratifying the treaty of Saint-Germain; while three, the United States, Ecuador, and Hedjaz remained aloof. All of the thirteen neutrals invited

to accede to the Covenant promptly did so.³ As a result, the League had forty-two original members when the first Assembly met in Geneva in November, 1920. Six more states were admitted in 1920, three in 1921, one in 1922, two in 1923, one in 1924, and one in 1926. The total membership of the League today would therefore be fifty-six if Costa Rica, by seceding at the end of last year, had not reduced it to fifty-five.

It might be interesting to analyze these figures from many points of view, as the evolution of the League is naturally bound to be influenced in its course by the composition of its membership. In the limited space at my disposal, I shall make only two observations. The first relates to the growing importance of Europe in the League. In 1920, sixteen out of a total of forty-two original members were European states, that is 38.1 per cent. Today, twenty-seven out of a total of fifty-five members are European, that is 49.1 per cent.

The other point to which I wish to call attention is the change resulting from the gradual entrance into the League of the states defeated in the Great War. The Covenant was drafted by the victors in 1919, and it would have been surprising if it had not been drafted primarily in their interest. All the permanent, and all but one of the non-permanent, seats on the Council were to be occupied by themselves. Now, in 1920 already, two of the defeated powers, Austria and Bulgaria were admitted into the League. In 1922, Hungary followed, and Sweden, a second former neutral, was elected to the enlarged Council. Finally, in 1926, Germany was admitted into the League and given a permanent seat on the Council. Furthermore, four former neutrals, Netherlands, Chile, Colombia, and Salvador, were elected as non-permanent members in the place of the two, Spain and Sweden who, up to last year, had alone represented that part of mankind which was not associated with the military triumphs of 1918. Thus, in the short space of seven years, the League of Victors became a League of Nations.

The rapid and steady growth in the total membership of the League is, of course, most gratifying both as a symptom and as a

³ See Manley O. Hudson, "Membership in the League of Nations," *American Journal of International Law*, XVIII, 436-458 (July, 1924).

cause of increasing strength and influence. The satisfaction which all friends of peace must feel on this score is unfortunately tempered by two considerations of very unequal importance. The first relates to the resignation in 1926 of two states which had, since the beginning, been represented on the Council. It is assuredly most regrettable that Spain and Brazil should have been led to sever their connection with the League, and it is much to be hoped and, I think we can add, confidently to be expected, that they may sooner or later find their way back to the Geneva fold.

Much more serious, in my view, is the prolonged aloofness of the United States of America and also, although in a lesser degree, of Russia, Turkey, Mexico, and of the smaller states which have not yet joined. The significance and the consequences of the absence of America from the councils of the League are being continuously and passionately discussed from divers points of view. Whereas during the first years of the League's existence, its whole policy seemed to be shaped by the desire to allure the United States to Geneva, today a reaction has undoubtedly set in. Furthermore, public opinion, even abroad, seems to be changing as regards this question. One of the League's strongest supporters in America⁴ has lately gone so far as to give it as his opinion that, on the whole, her absence may very well prove to have been a blessing in disguise. In view of its obvious importance for the evolution of the League, I may be permitted to consider this question for a brief moment quite dispassionately.

The absence of the United States I regard as a calamity, the tragedy of which can hardly be overestimated. As long as the great American republic declines to assume any responsibility for the maintenance of peace through the instrumentality of the League, the League, in my opinion, will lack the authority necessary for assuring the maintenance of peace. The United States is, in many respects, the actually or potentially most powerful nation of the world. It is, beyond doubt, the most powerful of those nations that have no specifically national interest nor bias

⁴ See David Hunter Miller, *Wilson's Place in History* (an address delivered at Albany, New York), p. 15.

in the disputes of Europe, that hot-bed of war. It is primarily to America's absence that I attribute the relative lack of fairness and effectiveness which the League has shown in dealing with such tasks as the government of the Sarr and the protection of minorities, or with such conflicts as those of Upper Silesia, Vilna, or Corfu. The absence of the United States has weakened the League, not only immediately, by depriving it of the support of what might be one of its most influential members. It has weakened it also, and perhaps still more, indirectly. It has done so by undermining the loyalty of various members toward the League, by preventing them, for lack of faith in its effectiveness or for fear of compromising their relations with America, from supporting it wholeheartedly and by allowing them in certain cases to flout its authority or to vitiate its decisions by more or less veiled threats of resignation. Without America, the League remains an association of nations which one may join or leave at one's discretion, whose corporate solidarity is feeble and whose uncertain collective will may be disregarded with impunity, at least by any of its principal members. With America as a full-fledged member of the League, on the contrary, the League would necessarily soon become universal. It would then be possible to envisage seriously the definite organization of peace on the basis of impartial justice and of real international security, without which war remains a constant threat and disarmament therefore little more than an extremely interesting but rather delusive subject of conversation and debate.

In stating this opinion, which I fully realize is not shared by most European friends of the League, I do not overlook the great political difficulties which might arise from the coöperation of a state whose population is still far from being nationally homogeneous, nor the great technical difficulties which would be bound to arise from the coöperation of a state, one branch of whose legislature seems to find peculiar satisfaction in asserting its own importance by opposing the foreign policy of the government. Nor do I suggest that all business in Geneva should be adjourned until the United States accedes to the Covenant, and the program of the League defined mainly with a view to making it acceptable

to Washington, as was perhaps too sedulously done during the first years after 1919. That policy would seem mistaken, less in its aim than because the means adopted for attaining it are perhaps not the best fitted for the purpose. To suggest humbly and imploringly that the League cannot do without America would seem as contrary to the dignity of Europe as to the purpose of attracting the United States. On the other hand, it would seem no less unwise to proclaim haughtily and with obvious insincerity that the League can very well forego American coöperation.

What, then, would appear to be the proper attitude? To do one's best without the United States, in the hope that the allurements of even limited success, combined with the consciousness of the terrible historical responsibility incurred by preventing that success from being complete, will sooner or later induce the nation to which the world owes the existence of the League to assume its natural place in Geneva.

THE COUNCIL

After the growth in membership, the second point to be noted in the evolution of the organization of the League is the gradual transformation undergone by the Council. In Lord Robert Cecil's original draft of January 20, 1919, only the five principal allied and associated powers were to be represented on the Council. Thanks to the combined efforts of General Smuts, President Wilson, and the representatives of the smaller powers in Paris, it was decided, first that two, and then that four, of the latter, chosen by all the members of the League,⁵ should be represented. According to the first edition of the Covenant of February 14, 1919, the Council was thus to consist of five permanent and four non-permanent members. In the final draft, this provision remained unaltered, but, perhaps at the instigation of the neutrals, a clause was added for the further enlargement of the Council.⁶

⁵ Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* (London, 1923), I, 226; Philip Baker, "The Making of the Covenant from the British Point of View," in *Les Origines et l'Oeuvre de la Société des Nations* (Copenhagen, 1924), II, 37.

⁶ Schücking und Wehberg, *Die Satzung des Völkerbundes*, 2. Auflage (Berlin, 1924), p. 297.

At its first meeting in Paris, on January 16, 1920, eight members sat at the table of the Council. Four represented the principal allied powers—the associated power having refused to continue to work with its former associates—and four, the so-called smaller nations. In 1922, as it was felt that certain important groups of states should no longer be left without representation on the Council, and as it was feared that non-reëlection of the existing members without the previous adoption of a regular code of procedure providing for a system of rotation in office might give rise to an acute crisis, and possibly to resignations, and as the adoption of such a code was resolutely opposed by various states, notably by Spain, the Council and the Assembly agreed to increase the number of non-permanent members from four to six. Finally, in 1926, a still further and much more sweeping change was made. Germany, whose admission had been refused in Versailles in 1919 and more and more generally hoped for in Geneva ever since, insisted on a permanent seat as one of the conditions of entrance. This alone made a change imperative. Besides, at least three states, Spain, Brazil, and Poland, had demanded a similar privilege, and one of them, Brazil, in March, 1926, went so far as to oppose Germany's request unless her own was considered. The refusal of Germany and of several other states to agree to these demands gave rise to the well-known crisis of March, 1926, which led to the appointment of a Commission of Fifteen to consider the reconstruction of the Council.

The recommendations of this commission were adopted, with some slight amendments, by the Council and the Assembly in September, 1926. As a consequence, the Council was enlarged by one permanent member and three non-permanent members. Its structure was further altered by the adoption of the principle of the non-immediate reëligibility of at least six of the nine non-permanent members.

My object in briefly recalling these familiar facts is but to show the general trend of the evolution of the Council and to seek to assess its significance. This evolution resulted, first, in the increase of the total membership of the Council from eight in 1920 to ten in 1922 and finally to fourteen in 1926, and, second, in the

numerical preponderance of the elected over the permanent members. The latter, who, according to the original Covenant, were to enjoy a majority of one, are today in a minority of four.

What is the significance, and what are the probable consequences, of these changes in the structure of the Council?

It should be noted, first of all, that they were brought about, not as the corollary of a new theory in international affairs, nor because they were deemed inherently excellent by their authors. They are clearly the result of the pressure of political circumstances. They sprang from the desire to placate candidates, or rather from the fear of disappointing them too grievously. The fact that the Council was enlarged by the will of the great majority of the members of the League is no more a proof of the real superiority of a large over a small Council, nor even of their preference in this respect, than the absorption of castor oil by one afflicted with indigestion is the recognition of his partiality for that beverage. As a preventive against a particular ailment, the enlargement of the Council seemed necessary, although the resignations of Spain and Brazil, which it was intended to forestall, must lead one to question even its prophylactic qualities. As a measure of general reform, however, it should be judged solely on its inherent merits and quite irrespectively of the circumstances which led to its adoption.

Prima facie there is undoubtedly something to be said in favor of enlarging the Council of a growing League with increasing responsibilities. Is it not conceivable that the Council owes its increased prestige to its being more numerous and more representative in membership in 1927 than in 1920, and is the enhanced prestige of the Council not a gain for the League as a whole?

That the prestige of the Council is today greater than it was at the birth of the League is a fact as indisputable as it is gratifying, but that the growth of its moral authority is due to the concomitant growth of its membership is, at best, a presumption. It is not difficult to discover other reasons for this progress, which was as noticeable from 1923 to 1926 as it has been since the addition of four new members, the accession of one of which, Germany,

of course represents much more than a mere quantitative increase. What, then, are the arguments which may be adduced against the innovation?

There is one which, although perhaps more frequently urged than any other, has not, in my opinion, much more than a formal significance. It has been stated, notably in the British Parliament, that, as the Council can act only when unanimous, the more numerous its members, the less the chances for unanimity and the greater, therefore, the danger of deadlock. As a matter of fact, in the present state of the League and of international society generally, decisions of vital importance for all states can be carried out only with the concurrence of all, whether they be represented on the Council or not. On the other hand, experience seems to have shown that decisions of minor importance can always be reached and carried out when the great powers on the Council are in agreement and can never be effectuated in the face of the decided veto of any one of them. To be sure, a small nation can, in exceptional cases, and if represented by men of exceptional courage and ability, hold out against the great, but only if, in addition, it be assured of the open support of public opinion the world over, and perhaps also of the covert support of at least one great power on the Council. Under the circumstances, therefore, the danger of deadlock in the Council does not appear to be a probable consequence of the enlargement of its membership.

There are, however, other objections to the enlargement of the Council which would seem to carry far greater weight. In the first place, I submit that the best policy is that which conforms most closely to political realities. That is the main reason why among many of the best friends of the League, especially in the smaller nations, a Council of fourteen members, a Council on which Salvador and Columbia have technically the same influence and the same rights as Great Britain and France, is looked upon with real misgivings. If the Council is to enjoy the greatest confidence, it must be a body in which real power is, to some extent at least, commensurate with real responsibility and in which all members speak with full knowledge and act with such

a measure of freedom as is compatible with their position as representatives of sovereign countries.

Now, can it be expected that a Council of fourteen most unequal members be such a Council? Is it not obvious that within it the real power, the real responsibility, and the real knowledge will be confined to an inner circle, whose decisions will be practically and politically, even though not legally, final and binding upon the other members? And what will be the position of the latter if they remonstrate and insist on their technical rights? If they refuse to endorse blindly the decisions of their major colleagues, as honest men and statesmen conscious of the dignity of their country and of their duties to the League should do in certain cases, what will be the likely result? Either they successfully resist the bullying to which they are bound to be exposed, and then their action may shatter the Council and the League itself by causing the great powers to withdraw the disputed question from the jurisdiction of Geneva. Or they submit in silence, as they are very much more likely to do, especially if they be diplomats accredited in Paris, Rome, or London. In this case their presence on the Council merely serves as a screen behind which the policies of the great powers are shaped and carried out—a screen, and at the same time a gag—which is unlikely to make for sincerity and open diplomacy.

This leads me to state the second main objection to the unduly enlarged Council which is entertained in many quarters. All careful students of current international politics will recognize that the great link between the League and the public opinion of the world is the Assembly. Everything that tends to increase the frankness, the reality, and thereby the interest, of the Assembly proceedings strengthens that necessary bond. Now, the Assembly, in its debates on the reports of the Council, which has been and should again become the great annual event in the life of the League, will be the more outspoken as it comprises more influential members whose countries have assumed no responsibility for the action of the Council under discussion. By increasing from four to six, and then to nine, the number of

the elected members of the Council, the League, while not, as I see it, making the Council more truly effective, has certainly exposed the Assembly to becoming less so, by depriving its natural leaders of their freedom of speech.

In many respects, the Council in its present composition, reminds one of a coalition government in which the parliamentary opposition is represented, not enough to be a real force in the executive department of the state, but just enough to be appreciably weakened in the legislature. That is why, paradoxical as it may seem at first glance, the recent enlargement of the Council tends, I believe, to endanger the authority of the Assembly and, indirectly, to diminish the influence of those very states whose chances of election to the Council it has increased.

On the other hand, the adoption by the Seventh Assembly of the rules of procedure regulating the election and limiting the term of office of the non-permanent members of the Council should be hailed as a very real gain which, in my view, to a large extent offsets the disadvantages to which I have just alluded. Thanks to these rules, it is to be expected that the Assembly will in future go about its business of electing the non-permanent members of the Council with greater freedom, with less nervous intriguing, and with less talk of crises and imminent resignations than has hitherto been the case.

As, in sketching the evolution of the Council, I have not refrained from very frankly criticising it in its present structure, I may be asked how, in my opinion, it might with advantage be improved upon. Although I attach no objective importance whatever to my views, but merely because I feel I owe it to those whom my all too negative criticism may have disquieted or irritated, I will briefly say that I would deem it preferable if (1) the membership were reduced from fourteen to nine or ten; (2) permanent membership were abolished and all members were annually or biennially elected by the Assembly; (3) a number of candidates equal to the number of great powers in the League were held to be indefinitely reëligible whereas the remaining members were to be considered reëligible only at every other

election; and (4) the rules of the Covenant, according to which the states not represented on the Council are to be invited to send representatives to sit as members for the consideration of all matters specially affecting their interests, were applied in a less perfunctory manner than heretofore.

Such a system, which it is of course much more difficult to set up today than would have been the case a year ago, would, I believe, present very real advantages.⁷ It would make the Council more responsive to the will of the Assembly and to public opinion. It would do away with the irritating distinction between elective and non-elective members to which the resignation of Spain and Brazil were due. It would prevent the over-representation of certain political groups, from which the Council and the League are undoubtedly suffering today.⁸ For all these reasons, it would, in my judgment, enhance the moral authority of the Council, as well as the influence of the Assembly and the vitality of the League as a whole.

Besides the structural evolution of the Council, another change in its actual composition should be noted, which is perhaps of even greater significance, and which is certainly to be hailed with unalloyed satisfaction. Whereas during the first years of the League's existence the members of the Council were often men of minor importance in their own countries, this has almost entirely ceased to be the case, at least in so far as the representatives of European governments are concerned. The fact that the Council meetings have come to bring the foreign ministers of the greater European states into personal contact four times a year is one of the happiest developments of recent times and one which would alone justify the existence of the League. Even if there were no available indications of the fact—which is, of course, far from being the case—the following figures alone would suffice to show conclusively that the Council and the League have appreciably gained in prestige in the course of the last seven years.

⁷ Some such system was urged from various quarters last spring. See, for instance, my article in the *Revue de Genève* entitled "La réforme du Conseil."

⁸ The present Council of fourteen comprises, for instance, four out of the five Continental allies of France, a circumstance which may well, to a certain degree, explain the disaffection of her rival, Italy.

Year	Number of Council Sessions	Number of States Represented	Number of Prime and Foreign Ministers Among Council Members	Proportion of Prime and Foreign Ministers to Number of Council Members
1920	11	8	5	5.7 per cent
1921	4	8	0	0 "
1922	7	8	0	0 "
1923	5	10	1	2 "
1924	5	10	7	14 "
1925	5	10	15	32 "
1926	6	10-14	27	39.5 "
1927*	2	14	12	42.9 "

* Up to August.

THE ASSEMBLY

Can the same be said of the Assembly?

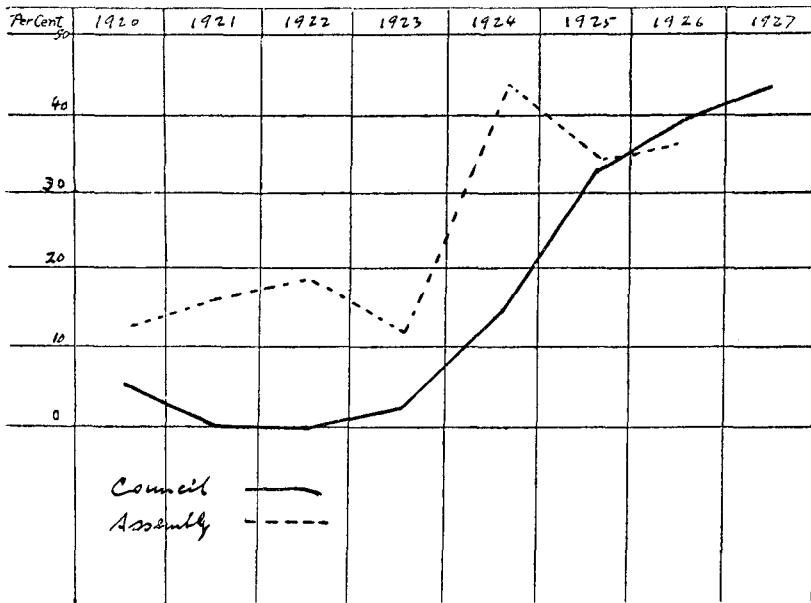
Measured by the same external standards, the Assembly also would seem to have gained in international prestige since 1920, as the following figures show:

Year	Number of States Represented	Number of Prime and Foreign Ministers Among Delegates	Proportion of Prime or Foreign Ministers to Number of Delegation
1920	47	6	12.8 per cent
1921	52	8	15.4 "
1922	51	9	17.6 "
1923	50	6	12.0 "
1924	51	22	43.1 "
1925	50	17	34.0 "
1926*	47	16	34.0 "
1926	50	18	36.0 "

* Extraordinary Assembly.

If the presence at the Assembly of the leading statesmen of the members of the League is a true indication of the importance which they themselves and their governments attach to the work done in Geneva every autumn, then these figures also tend to show an encouraging development. As a symptom of League vitality, what one might call the improved membership of the Assembly is undoubtedly gratifying.

In order to judge fairly of the evolution of the Assembly as a part of the institutional architecture of the League, however, it would, of course, be necessary to take other indications into account also. It would, in particular, be necessary to estimate and to compare the significance of the statements made, of the resolutions passed, of the conventions drafted, and, above all, of the influence exercised by the successive Assemblies on the development of the League and on world politics in general. It is obvious



that this cannot be done by any simple statistical method, nor with any pretense of scientific accuracy. No one will deny that the Assembly of 1920, by adopting the statute of the Court; the Assembly of 1922, by the stimulus it gave to the reconstruction of Austria; the Assembly of 1923, by the pressure it brought to bear on the settlement of the Corfu affair; the Assembly of 1924, by drafting the Protocol; and the Assembly of 1926, by admitting Germany and thereby putting the Locarno treaties into force, played a decisive part in world affairs.

On the other hand, I wonder whether many careful students of the League's evolution would deny that the first Assemblies showed a spirit of self-confidence and of constructive imagination which the more recent have failed to display. Whether it be the disappointment over the rejection of the Protocol, the loss of leadership resulting from the death of Branting, the absence of Professor Gilbert Murray and the acceptance of office in Great Britain by Lord Cecil, the natural effect of age, habit, and experience, or the growing preponderance of the Council, it is hard to say. But personally I cannot escape the conviction that in the wholesome emulation between the two bodies, the last three Assemblies⁹ have not held their own against the Council and that, unless a reaction sets in, the latter body may become dangerously predominant. I say "dangerously predominant," because nothing could weaken the loyalty of the majority of the states toward the League, and thereby the influence of the League itself, more than the feeling that, in the Assembly, they were being treated with insufficient consideration, maneuvered, and subjected to undue pressure by the minority of large powers represented on the Council. It will be extremely interesting in this connection to note the effects of the new rules of procedure governing the election of the enlarged Council. Let us hope that they may not result in still further weakening the Assembly by splitting it up into rival factions.

The Assembly can play its all-important part as a general director of League policy and as a link between the Council and the public opinion of the world only if it remains conscious of its rights and of its duties, of its dignity, and of its corporate unity. Its official members must, of course, never forget that they are not merely individual exponents of their own private views, but also responsible representatives of their respective states. At the same time, some of them at least should have the imagination to realize that the League is more than only the sum of its constituent nations, that it is a new political entity which, as such, needs supranational leadership and calls for a new form of world statesmanship.

⁹ Prior, of course, to that of 1927.

Possibly the presence in the Assembly of a small number of the world's greatest minds, drawn from other than only political fields and freed from all governmental instructions, might quicken its vitality, enhance its prestige, and increase its usefulness. It has been observed, and it is not difficult to understand, that real international leadership is rarely compatible with strictly national responsibility. That is the main reason why men like Nansen, Lord Cecil before he joined the British cabinet, and Gilbert Murray exercised and, in the case of Nansen, still exercise, such real leadership in the Assembly. Having no strictly binding official mandate, they expressed only their own views. By so doing, they often reëchoed the hopes, the fears, and the wishes of the world more faithfully and more effectively than their diplomatic colleagues.

Would it be inconceivable that, say, three men of great international reputation, such as Einstein, H. G. Wells, or the French historian Aulard, should be invited to attend the Assemblies with the right to address them if they felt that they had a useful message to deliver? Could not, for instance, the Committee on Intellectual Coöperation be requested to choose, every year, three such men, and might it not thereby render the League and the world a service truly worthy of the individual eminence of its members?

The foes of the League have so insistently warned their followers against the danger of the super-state that its friends, in combating that notion, have often gone to the opposite extreme. If by a super-state we understand a political entity whose sovereignty overrides that of its component parts, the League is, of course, nothing of the kind. The states members of the League of Nations enjoy a far greater measure of independence than do, for instance, the so-called sovereign cantons which make up the Swiss Confederation. It would, however, in my opinion, be equally erroneous as a statement of fact and unfortunate as a forecast of policy to declare that the foundation of the League had exercised and would exercise no influence whatever on the status of its members, but merely offers them new possibilities of international coöperation. The British dominions also, to take another

national example, are free and equal members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. So, at least, we are constantly being reminded on the highest authority, and so we are valiantly striving to believe. Even if our benighted Continental minds succeed in understanding and sharing this conception, does it follow that we must look upon the British Empire as nothing more than a method of international coöperation and not as being, in itself, a legal entity and a political reality of the greatest importance?

So with the League of Nations. Much less than an all-powerful super-state, much more than a mere international letter-box, it is a Commonwealth. Its authority, ill-defined but none the less real, reflects the fundamental interdependence of its members and rests at bottom on their inability to stand alone and on their common will to pursue together common aims. In this pursuit, they need more than purely national leadership. The rôle of the Assembly—and there can be no greater—is to afford the opportunity for the gradual assertion of such leadership. Where are the leaders whose intelligence and sympathies will be sufficiently broad, whose constructive imagination sufficiently powerful, and whose eloquence sufficiently inspiring to shape into one policy the unexpressed but universally felt hopes and desires of a war-weary humanity, slowly but still steadily awakening to the consciousness of its fundamental unity and of its ideal oneness of purpose?

The world, the League, and the Assembly are still—are more than ever—awaiting such leaders, whom the present forms of national organization have, since Woodrow Wilson, failed fully to produce. May the press and the universities, so strongly represented in the present audience, succeed where parliaments and governments have heretofore failed, and may they, even if they cannot overnight beget or discover new world leaders, at least prepare public opinion to accept them when the gods of history allow them to appear on the scene of mankind!

THE SECRETARIAT

According to Article 2 of the Covenant, “the action of the League . . . shall be effected through the instrumentality of an

Assembly and of a Council, with a permanent Secretariat." The French text, "une Assemblée . . . un Conseil assistés d'un Secrétariat permanent," indicates rather more clearly that the Secretariat was conceived to be an auxiliary body, intended to assist the Assembly and the Council.

The idea of a permanent secretariat seems to have been born of the experience gained during the war, notably by the British, in the organization and working of similar administrative bodies assisting the British committee of imperial defence, the war cabinet, and the various interallied councils.¹⁰ Whatever its origin, it has turned out to be one of the most novel and most fruitful conceptions of the founders of the League. Its two fundamental characteristics were to be its purely administrative functions and its entirely international composition and spirit. It was to prepare and to carry out the decisions of the Assembly and of the Council, not to initiate nor to shape any policy of its own. The allegiance of its members was to be to the League only and not to the governments of the various states from whom they might be drawn.

Let us examine in turn these two aspects of the Secretariat, as it was established at the birth of the League and as it has developed since. As an administrative agency, the Secretariat was, from its inception, a very much more vital organ of the League than the language of the Covenant would lead one to suspect—and than most of its authors probably anticipated. This is due to two main reasons. It may be laid down, first, as a general principle that the relative importance of a civil service stands in inverse ratio to the stability and activity of the political authority it assists. Where governments frequently change and where ministers are more engrossed with extraneous than with departmental duties, as is the case in most parliamentary states, the civil service is the real power behind the throne. Where, on the contrary, as for instance in my own country, the government is very stable, the actual tenure of office of its members very long, and their duties more administrative than political, the civil service plays only a subordinate part.

¹⁰ See P. Baker, in *Les Origines et l'Oeuvre de la Société des Nations*, quoted above, vol. II, pp. 21, 40 et seq.

Now, if one may compare the Council and the Assembly of the League with national governments on the one hand and the League Secretariat with national civil services on the other, it is quite obvious that the balance of influence was at first in Geneva very heavily weighted in favor of the administrative as against the political organs. The League, especially during the first three or four years of its existence, was a novel and apparently rather insignificant instrument of international government. The states represented on the Council and in the Assembly at first, as we have seen, were inclined to send to Geneva men of minor importance who changed from time to time and for whom their intermittent League duties were never their main tasks. The government of the League was therefore a weak government. Its civil service, on the other hand, was correspondingly strong, all the more so as its members were very discriminatingly chosen, from an extremely wide field, for their ability and their devotion to the ideals of the League. In all minor matters, and even in several important ones, the functions of the members of the Council and of the Assembly consisted mainly in delivering speeches, in reading reports, and in voting resolutions which had been carefully drafted for them by the Secretariat.

During these first years, Council meetings might sometimes have been compared with the harmless pastime of children playing with their toy sailboats on the pond of a city park, the masterful children being the Secretariat and the cardboard admirals on board the boats the dignified and indolent representatives of the powers. As the League grew in importance, a gradual change came about. National governments, recognizing its possibilities, tended to send their most representative men to Geneva, to entrust their national civil services with the preparation of official instructions, and earnestly to discuss these instructions before League meetings. Accordingly, the pond became the high seas of the political world, the toy sailboats the super-dreadnaughts of national policy, and the bemedalled and beplumed but very passive admirals the real commanders in action. As a result, the part of the masterful children on the shore naturally became less decisive and more contemplative.

My impertinent and doubly irreverent simile, for which I proffer my humblest apologies to the children no less than to the admirals, is of course much overdrawn. It will have served its purpose, however, if it has made clear how the growing importance of the League has affected the functions of the Council on the one hand and of the Secretariat on the other. What the Secretariat has lost, however, in immediate influence over vital League decisions, it has regained, on the other hand, through the increased scope of League action. It has gained also through the development and increased specialization and efficiency of the countless advisory commissions which now coöperate in the preparation of the resolutions of the Council and of the Assembly. The Covenant, it may be remarked, provided for a Secretariat to assist only these two major organs of the League. The advisory committees, except for the permanent military and mandates commissions, are a purely organic product of its evolution, having been provided for, not by its constitution, but solely by subsequent decisions. As a result of this evolution, almost every section of the Secretariat of the League has become the special secretariat of one or more advisory committees. Thereby the work of the Secretariat has been increased, in technical quality as well as in volume, far beyond the expectations to which a mere analysis of the Covenant might give rise.

The volume of work entrusted to the Secretariat can, of course, be measured only by indirect methods, all symptoms indicating, however, that it has regularly, and very considerably, increased in the course of the last seven years. Thus the number of documents dealt with by the Secretariat registry, the number of meetings held under League auspices and with the administrative assistance of the Secretariat, the statistics of correspondence and publications, all show a striking increase. The staff itself has also increased from 183 in 1920 to 467 in 1926; and in spite of the natural economy of effort which experience and routine must have assured, that increase is certainly not more than proportional to the enlarged scope and volume of its tasks.

The original conception of the Secretariat appears to have been that of an entirely international and impartial body. To place its

international impartiality above suspicion, some of the authors of the Covenant at one time considered the possibility of calling upon a distinguished statesman from one of the smaller countries to organize and to direct it as "chancellor" of the League of Nations. This idea was abandoned in favor of the present arrangement before the final adoption of the Covenant. In view of subsequent developments, it is difficult to imagine how an independent chancellor, drawn from a small nation and deprived of the national backing of any particular government, could have secured and maintained the necessary authority over an international organization so far from universal in membership and so preponderantly dependent upon the good will of Great Britain and France as was the League of Nations during the first years of its existence.

It was clearly understood, however, from the start that the officials of the Secretariat were to be international civil servants, and not in any respect national delegates. This conception was very forcefully expressed in the report presented to the Council by the British representative, Mr. A. J. Balfour (as he then was), and adopted by that body at its meeting in Rome on May 19, 1920. The relevant passages of that report read as follows:

. . . . "By the terms of the Treaty, the duty of selecting the staff falls upon the Secretary-General, just as the duty of approving it falls upon the Council. In making his appointments, he had primarily to secure the best available men and women for the particular duties which had to be performed; but in doing so, it was necessary to have regard to the great importance of selecting the officials from various nations. Evidently no one nation or group of nations ought to have a monopoly in providing the material for this international institution. I emphasize the word "international," because the members of the Secretariat once appointed are no longer the servants of the country of which they are citizens, but become for the time being the servants only of the League of Nations. Their duties are not national but international. . . . I shall propose that no member of the Secretariat, during his or her term of office, shall accept any honor or decoration except for services rendered prior to the

appointment. The reasons for this proposal are fairly clear. . . . The members of the staff carry out, as I have explained, not national but international, duties. Nothing should be done to weaken the sense of their international allegiance; the acceptance of special marks of distinction or favor, either from their own or from any other country, militates, in our view, against the general spirit of the Covenant."

This view was fully shared by the Secretary-General himself, who, in a memorandum submitted at the same session of the Council, declared: "The members of the Secretariat act, during their period of office, in an international capacity, and are not in any way representatives of their own government."

As an almost necessary consequence of this conception of the Secretariat, the leading officials of the League were, at first, drawn, not from the ranks of the national diplomatic services, but quite deliberately from other walks of life. Of the four under-secretaries appointed in 1920, for instance, none was a professional diplomat. Today, three out of four of them are. Although still theoretically responsible to the Secretary-General alone, they, as well as many other recently appointed officials, were all chosen in close consultation with the governments of their respective countries.

That a man who has begun and probably intends to end his career in the diplomatic service of his own country should not consider himself to be loaned to the League for purposes not solely international, while temporarily occupying a position of political importance to which he has been appointed on the express recommendation of his own government, is more than one may expect of human nature. And that a Secretariat largely constituted of men thus seconded by their governments should still be held to be entirely impartial when dealing with questions affecting the prestige and interests of their respective countries is more than common sense will admit. It is impossible, therefore, not to note the evolution which has taken place in this respect in the structure and spirit of the Secretariat in the course of the last years.

The famous decree by which the government of one of the principal states members of the League officially and expressly

asserted its unconditional authority over the citizens of that state holding international positions is but one external symptom of that evolution. The position thus adopted by that government with a measure of frankness which is not, in my eyes, the unloveliest trait of its general policy, is perhaps not very different from that more discreetly assumed by others. So long as that position remains unchallenged by the League as a whole, it will be very difficult, to say the least, to consider all members of the Secretariat as entirely above the suspicion of national partiality in their international functions.

If one must note, not without regret, this evolution of the Secretariat, one should neither overlook the circumstances which have determined it nor exaggerate the disadvantages and the dangers of the present position. The fact that certain governments have brought increasing pressure to bear on the Secretariat is a proof of the growing political importance they attach to the League. In so far, it is the symptom, however unwelcome in itself, of a very welcome development. Furthermore it is obviously conducive to prompt and easy international coöperation if the governments called upon to coöperate are represented in Geneva by officials who enjoy their full confidence. This confidence they are, of course, the more likely to enjoy if appointed on their express recommendation. In a certain respect, the change which has come about in the relative importance of the national and international functions of the Secretariat is a tribute paid to what I have called elsewhere the League to promote international coöperation by what I have termed the League to prevent war.

In the field of contentious political debate, the absolute international independence and impartiality of members of the Secretariat is clearly much more important than in that of non-contentious activities. As the latter field has been tilled by the League with far greater success than the former, it is not surprising that there has been a trend in favor of another type of plowman. The sociologically-minded historian will readily detect here an example of the function influencing the development of the organ.

It was originally intended by many that the main duty of the League should be to prevent war by settling political conflicts on the basis of justice. If and when the League shall, with confidence and energy, again give this item the first place on its program of action, the demand for a Secretariat exclusively composed of officials as unbiased and as purely international in their loyalty as human nature will permit will doubtless again arise. Meanwhile it should be noted that in at least one of the very rare cases in which contentious issues vitally involving the political interests of great powers have come before the League, the Secretariat officials of the interested nationality have remained in the background. The case to which I refer is the Mosul dispute between Great Britain and Turkey, in the consideration of which the place of the British Secretary-General at the Council table was taken by his French deputy.

It should finally be noted also that, as the League grows more universal in membership and the Secretariat more representative in its international composition, the disadvantages and dangers of national bias on the part of the individual officials grow less. To be sure, justice in international relations is not to be defined as the mere mathematical resultant of divergent national claims. There is no doubt, however, that the chances of justice in the world are greater when all divergent claims are presented with equal force than when some alone are urged and others ignored for lack of advocates to press them. After the perhaps impossible ideal of an international civil service whose members would all be inspired solely by the pure love of international justice, the next best thing is therefore a Secretariat in which all national claims are fairly and freely represented. In this respect, also, the admission of Germany into the League and of a considerable number of Germans into the Secretariat should make for greater, if not necessarily for ideal, justice in the consideration of international affairs.

THE ADVISORY COMMISSIONS

Besides the Council, the Assembly, and the Secretariat, the other major organs of the League are the advisory committees,

the International Labor Organization, and the Permanent Court of International Justice. Of these I shall say but little, not because there is little to say, but on the contrary because the detailed study of their organization and development would take more time and space than I can spare.

The advisory committees I regard as the most symptomatic structural product of the League's evolution. As aforesaid, the Covenant itself provided for only two such organs, the permanent Military Commission and the permanent Mandates Commission. The pressure of circumstances, however, has led the Council to surround itself with a whole army of international experts divided and subdivided into a large number of divisions, brigades, regiments, and battalions. Almost half of the recently issued "Report to the eighth ordinary session of the Assembly of the League on the work of the Council, on the work of the Secretariat, and on the measures taken to execute the decisions of the Assembly" is devoted to the activities of these advisory bodies.

In the spring of this year an investigation was made in the Secretariat as to the number and average duration of meetings held under the auspices of the League during the years 1920 to 1926. Although these figures include the sessions of the Council and of the Assembly, they of course relate mainly to meetings of the various advisory bodies, and they may therefore not irrelevantly be quoted in this connection. They are as follows:

*Statistics Regarding the Number of Meetings Held Under
the Auspices of the League During the Years 1920-1926*

Year	Number of meetings held	Average number of days the meetings were in session
1920	23	10.00
1921	37	8.43
1922	47	5.74
1923	67	6.82
1924	86	7.00
1925	94	5.77
1926	105	5.54

What do these facts and figures point to? They have but one significance. The League of Nations, created essentially as a political institution to prevent wars between nations, has in fact become the great administrative agency for the promotion of voluntary international coöperation between them in time of peace. The technical advisory committees, which multiply in number and specialize in function from year to year, are the structural expression of a world need.

Divided into separate units for purposes of political self-expression, humanity is, economically and socially, one great organism. As its component parts become more conscious of their interdependence, this organism tends to express its unity by means of other than political institutions. In the present state of civilization, there is in this respect a fundamental contradiction. Politically, nations seem to be striving apart, and never have they been more insistent on their sovereign rights as independent entities. Economically and socially, however, they are being drawn closer and closer together by forces which are ever growing more irresistible and of which they are growing ever more conscious. Through its technical organizations and activities, the League is seeking to reconcile these otherwise incompatible tendencies. It is striving to overcome the obstacles which the dogma of national sovereignty has placed along the road of human evolution. It is thus promoting voluntary coöperation between those whom frontiers divide, but whom common aims and needs unite.

The higher the political barriers, the more imperious the necessity of international coöperation. But the closer and more continuous international coöperation becomes, the more irksome and the less indispensable the high political barriers will doubtless in time become. Thus, checked in its frontal attack on the citadel of war by the as yet invincible forces of national sovereignty, the League is by means of its technical bodies executing a vast flanking movement around and against it. This movement is slow and its achievement undramatic, but its eventual success seems assured, unless mankind would deliberately prefer poverty and stagnation in a state of potential war to well-being, fraternity, and progress in international security.

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

Of all the numerous technical institutions of the League, the International Labor Organization is the most important, as it is by far the largest. In fact, under the inspiring leadership of the fiery director of the International Labor Office, its independence and its size have become such that it cannot properly be dealt with as a mere part of the League structure, but calls for special study. I would here note only that, in its evolution, it has met with the same difficulties as the rest of the League and that it is struggling to overcome them by resorting to similar methods.

It was intended primarily to improve social conditions the world over by gradually levelling them up to the standards of the most advanced nations. In the drafting, the signing, the ratification, and, above all, in the effective application, of its labor conventions, it has constantly been battling against the forces of national egotism. Without, of course, abandoning this, its main task, it has tended more and more to enlarge the field of its coöperative and non-contentious activities. It has thus become a great international research institution. By ascertaining the facts of industrial life and progress the world over, and by disseminating their knowledge by means of its countless publications, it is attempting to build up a more enlightened public opinion. Thus it hopes that the obstacles which stand in the way of the achievement of its main purpose of international legislation may little by little be overcome.

THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

The Permanent Court of International Justice is the last of the organs of the League to be considered here. It is, in my opinion, in many respects the greatest, and would, of course, also demand an independent study. I can but briefly outline its history and note the evolution in its functions which, perhaps partly unforeseen at the time of the drafting of the Covenant, is doubtless due to the same general causes which have so strongly influenced the development of the other organs of the League.

Article 14 of the Covenant, which called for the creation of the Permanent Court of International Justice, reads as follows:

“The Council shall formulate and submit to the members of the League for adoption plans for the establishment of a permanent court of international justice. The court shall be competent to hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it. The court may also give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly.”

The Council, at its second meeting, in February, 1920, decided to appoint a committee of ten jurists for the purpose of preparing the plans mentioned in the first sentence of this article. These jurists met at the Hague in June and July, 1920, and agreed on a draft statute which, amended by the Council in October, 1920, and by the first Assembly, was unanimously approved by the latter body on December 13, 1920. This statute having come into force before the second Assembly, the Court was elected on September 14 and 16, 1921, and on January 30, 1922, it met for its first session.

The most important change proposed by the Council and reluctantly accepted by the Assembly was the suppression of the compulsory jurisdiction with which the jurists had wished to endow the Court. Although the principle of compulsory jurisdiction seemed to meet with the approval of the majority of the delegates of the Assembly, it was opposed notably by the representatives of France and Great Britain as contrary to the Covenant. It was accordingly sacrificed on the altar of unanimity. As a concession to the partisans of the extension of the Court's powers, its jurisdiction was rendered optionally compulsory, i.e., compulsory in juridical matters as between those states which once for all accepted it as such. Of this possibility sixteen states have availed themselves up to date: nine¹¹ in 1921, four¹² in 1922, one¹³ in 1923, and two¹⁴ in 1926.

Accordingly, it would seem, first, that the principle of compulsory jurisdiction is more popular among the minor states than

¹¹ Bulgaria, Denmark, Haiti, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay.

¹² Austria, China, Finland, Lithuania.

¹³ Esthonia.

¹⁴ Abyssinia, Belgium.

among the great powers, and, secondly, that it is not gaining ground very rapidly. It should be noted, however, that its progress cannot be fairly measured by this standard alone, as it may be, and has been, promoted also by other means. Thus every recent year has witnessed an increase in the number of bilateral and multilateral conventions providing for compulsory recourse to the Court. As a result, a large section in the field of international relations is today already placed under its legal guardianship. If we consider the scores of international agreements which provide in the last resort for the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court—the mandates, minority, Locarno, arbitration treaties, and the host of technical conventions—if we consider the thousands of possible disputes which may arise over their interpretation and application, we will note with some surprise that the Court has been called upon to decide only nine cases in the course of the last five years. For this apparent anomaly, there are at least two excellent reasons.

In the first place, resort to the Court, the *ultima ratio* in peaceful international relations, is provided for only if negotiations and attempts at conciliation have failed. Now in spite of certain glaring failures, one should never overlook the fact that diplomacy almost invariably succeeds in dealing with current international affairs. Secondly, almost any negotiated, and therefore willingly or reluctantly but always freely accepted, solution is preferable to the costly and uncertain decision of a court. This is true in international relations still more than in private business. Judicial decisions are, or at least should be, imperative. If they seldom give complete satisfaction to the victors, they rarely fail to produce resentment in the vanquished. The Permanent Court of International Justice may therefore very well have assured the negotiated settlement of several disputes by the mere fact of its existence and the consequent threat of its possible intervention. For both these reasons, friends of peace should not deplore its relative inactivity.

Moreover, this inactivity has not been as marked as it would appear if the rendering of judicial decisions were alone considered. The Court, as is well known, may also be called upon by the

Council and the Assembly to give legal advice. As a matter of fact, this consultative function has been more freely exercised than the other. Up to date, the Court has delivered advisory opinions in thirteen different cases. This predominance of the consultative over the purely judicial functions of the Court is extremely significant. It is still another symptom of what is, in my view, the main characteristic of the League's evolution since its birth. Here, as on every other point on which we have touched in this study, we see the League developing its voluntary and coöperative activities at the expense of its coercive functions.

In the present stage of international relations the League may successfully influence the policy of its member states by advice, persuasion, and emulation. It apparently cannot yet impose, and certainly has not yet imposed, its collective will on any recalcitrant member. The balance between international solidarity and national sovereignty is still too heavily weighted in favor of the latter. In other words, we are still in the first stage of the transitional period of world history, of which the creation of the League may be said to have marked the beginning. The center of gravity of political power is still almost completely in the capitals of the individual states members of the League, and not in Geneva.

If humanity is to be spared a relapse into the dark ages of national extermination through international strife, the present and future centuries must witness the gradual shifting of this center of gravity. As in the past the establishment of national sovereign states alone put an end to armed conflicts between rival clans, cities, and provinces, so in the future are permanent international peace and real security difficult to conceive unless the collective will of mankind be endowed with the power of overriding that of its constituent national groups. This ultimate goal is indeed still very far distant. The foundation of the League of Nations, however, is nothing if not a first momentous step in that direction.

CONCLUSION: THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LEAGUE

So much for the evolution of the League, that is, of its structure, its anatomy. To consider with equal detail the development of

its activities, its physiology, would require more time and space than we can here devote to the subject. We can the more readily dispense with this discussion since what we have noted with respect to the changes undergone by the organs of the League has already indicated the general trend of the evolution of its functions. A few general remarks may therefore suffice in conclusion.

In various publications I have examined the functions of the League under the three headings of the execution of the peace treaties, the promotion of international coöperation, and the prevention of war. The comments which this system of classification has aroused in various scientific journals confirms my belief that it is not only convenient but on the whole also sound. I shall therefore adhere to it here.¹⁵

It is in the execution of the peace treaties that the enlargement of the League's membership has had its most decisive effects. When the League was born, at the beginning of 1920, its Council found itself entrusted with the execution of several very important measures relating notably to minorities, mandates, the Saar basin, and the free city of Dantzig. The Council, at that time, was, with the sole exception of the Spanish ambassador in Paris, entirely made up of representatives of the victorious powers. These powers had imposed the treaties of peace on the vanquished and had, at the same time, excluded them from the League. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the spirit in which the Council went about this, its first important business, was hardly that of a disinterested and impartial magistrate.

As one after another of the vanquished joined the League, as Sweden, in 1922, was elected to the Council, and as finally Germany, in 1926, was admitted both to the League and to the Council, a gradual change for the better took place in this respect. Although that evolution has not yet reached its natural conclusion, it is certain that, to mention only two examples, the administration of the Saar and the protection of minorities are

¹⁵ See *La Politique de la Suisse dans la Société des Nations*, translated into German as *Die Politik der Schweiz im Völkerbund* (Coire and Leipzig, 1925), and *International Relations as Viewed from Geneva* (New Haven and Oxford, 1925).

today being carried on in a more equitable and less vindictive spirit than was the case in 1920. As was to be expected, it is in this field that the influence of Germany in the League has been most noticeable and the intervention of her representatives at the Council table most active and most effective.

If permanent peace can only be based on justice and if justice in international relations, as elsewhere, demands that fair and impartial treatment be measured out to all concerned, then the recent evolution of the League of Nations in the execution of the treaties is tending in the direction of permanent peace. The goal, although not yet attained, is now in sight. The sooner it is reached the better, not only for those at whose expense the treaties were drawn up and for their authors, but especially also for the League itself, to whom the war bequeathed, as a most unwelcome and onerous legacy, the duty of settling its estate.

In the field of international coöperation, as we have already seen, the League is performing a very useful, a very varied, and an ever increasing task. Its main achievements here would seem to lie in the economic sphere. In this sphere the list of the services it has rendered to humanity is already very long and very honorable. May it suffice to recall the reconstruction of Austria and of Hungary, as well as the more recent feats in Greece and in Bulgaria. The list has recently been lengthened by the addition of the successful Economic Conference in May, 1927.

Economic progress in international affairs can be promoted only through the combined efforts of individual enterprise, state action, and League coördination. Of the three members of this team, no one will dispute that the League has, since its existence, pulled at least its full share of the load. If all states were wise and courageous enough to follow the advice they have received from the League, especially in Brussels in 1920 and in Geneva in 1927, the world in general and Europe in particular would soon be out of the thorny economic jungle in which they have been plunged as a result of the war.

The record of the League in its efforts to prevent war, its third and most important task, is, alas, not so brilliant. Doubtless it

has indirectly done much to promote peace by more fairly executing the peace treaties and by promoting international co-operation. Doubtless, also, it has directly done no less to promote peace by promoting publicity and arbitration in international relations. But it would be a bold, a very superficial, or a very dubious friend of the League who would pretend that in the matter of the pacific revision of obsolete treaties and in the field of security and disarmament, Geneva has not grievously disappointed the world.

Article 8 of the Covenant, adopted in 1919, provides that "the members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments." When we realize that today, after nearly eight years of investigation, study, and debate by the Council, the Assembly, the Permanent Military Commission, the Temporary Mixed Commission, countless special committees, sub-committees, and conferences, the powers have failed to bind themselves to carry out this pledge, or even to agree on a plan of reduction of armaments, and when they still show the greatest reluctance to arrive at a conclusion on a plan which would aim merely to limit their armaments, that is, to maintain them at the present level, it requires more official optimism than I can muster to declare complacently that reasonable progress has been made toward the solution of a very difficult problem. It must be frankly admitted that here we are faced with a real failure—a failure more disquieting, as I see it, in its causes than in its immediate consequences.

The main results of this failure are a continued burden of taxation for all concerned and a continued, and perhaps increasing, state of international suspicion. But unfortunate and dangerous as these are, the lack of security which explains, if it does not completely justify, the ineffectiveness of all previous efforts toward disarmament would seem more unfortunate and more dangerous still. Nations may refrain from disarmament for any one of three reasons: the desire to maintain their authority over discontented subjects of the state at home or abroad, the will to extend it at the expense of their neighbors, or finally the fear of encroachment and aggression from without. Of these three

factors, which doubtless all play some part in preventing disarmament today, the last is certainly the most important.

The main justification of national armaments is, therefore, the feeling of national insecurity. Nations feel insecure because they do not trust their neighbors and because, distrusting them, they do not and cannot as yet rely on the League as an institution able and willing to protect them in case of need. Dispel this international suspicion, and the protection of the League becomes both easy and unnecessary. Create confidence in the protection of the League, and international suspicion becomes both less real and less dangerous.

To dispel international suspicion and to create confidence in the protection of the League are consequently the two fundamental methods of promoting disarmament. Both have been and are being applied, but neither as yet with very great success. As long as the nations, insisting on their ultimate right to be a law unto themselves, refuse to accept unconditionally the supreme authority of a world commonwealth, they will remain a threat one to another and therefore a danger to themselves.

The League of Nations is a timid and still only half-conscious effort to establish this supreme authority. If we were to base our present attitude and our forecasts on a comparison between the League as it is today and as it would be if its authority were unquestioned and universal, we might well lose hope. But if, more wisely, we compare the world today with the League such as it is and as it is growing daily, with the world as it would be without the League—as it was without the League ten years ago—then our generation should be filled with gratitude for the past and with confidence, courage, and determination for the future.