

TOPICS OF THE DAY

"MOVEMENTS": THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: THE AMERICAN STAND:
MR. BONAR LAW: LORD BEAVERBOOK.

THE world has experienced the bifurcated Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Steam Age, the Electric Age. It is now in the "Movement" Age, the natural sequence of which—in analogy with the last of the seven individual ages of man—is Dotage,

Is second childhood and mere oblivion
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

The line of demarcation between dotage and an Age which permits itself to be directed and governed by "Movements" is scarcely distinguishable. We shall probably lapse into complete political dotage with great celerity. The Stone and Bronze and Iron Ages were long and slow in passing. The Steam and Electric Ages followed in comparatively quick succession. The last two Ages promise to complete their course still more swiftly. The first of them is upon us. Within it are the bursting buds of the ultimate flower of social senility,—or is it anility? In the Stone Age the wisest and strongest ruled successively the family and the tribe. In the Bronze Age the tribe had expanded into the nation, which still retained its king, who however had delegated some of his authority and many of the functions of his office to chosen subordinates. The Iron Age witnessed the further circumscription of kingly power by capable subjects, and the establishment of what is now sneered at or reviled as "oligarchy," the rule of the more enlightened over the less. There must have been a strong tincture of iron in the blood of the generations of that Age. They had not been assured, and did not believe that

Only those who cannot read can rule.

In fact, they believed the very opposite. With the advent of the Steam Age came rapidity of mental as well as physical motion. Not to "keep going" in some direction was to acknowledge a falling "behind the times", and to incur opprobrium or disgrace. Democracy, which had at first meant nothing more than the governance of society by the chosen representatives of those specially qualified to rule, was re-defined and established as mobocracy. The Electric Age intensely accelerated the rate of "advance" into a mad whirl of social atoms, each trying to out-distance the other and acknowledging no guidance but that of the demagogue. "Old Experience",

old Wisdom, old Knowledge were told to their faces that they were fools. Nothing but the "polls"—the tops of the skulls—of men and women was longer regarded as worth counting or considering. The brains beneath the polls no longer mattered. The "poll" of an utterly ignorant girl or boy of twenty-one was to be legally accepted as of no less value for nation or community guidance than the intellect of a sage or a seer. That was the post-war social and political prepossession. Through it we have swept into the "Movement Age". Society has become like unto a grain of radium, emitting random sparks in surrounding darkness. If some of the sparks happen to converge, they form the nucleus of an "organization". The "organization" starts the "Movement". The Movement attracts "leaders", who institute propaganda. If there is no effective "counter-movement", which there seldom is, the Movement occupies and takes possession of the whole field of action. Individuals need not hope or attempt to stay its triumphant course. It sweeps irresistibly on, and its victory means the enactment into law or custom of whatever unpractical or nonsensical idea it may have started with. One absurd enthusiast, or one designing schemer with a yearning for notoriety or a paid secretaryship or the editorship of an "organ", may easily serve as the originator of a "Movement" that is intended to lead on to a tyrannical dictatorship over the mass of a community. Never has society been more subject than at present to what means in practice an individual despotism. And the despotism is of the most intolerable kind. In other days it was at least possible to get rid of a despot. Now, with an organized and carefully drilled mob arrayed between him and the helpless public, he is unassailable. A generation which has thus deliberately prepared for crank-demagogue sway is surely far on in its dotage.

A RELATIVELY innocuous movement for the stated purpose of "popularizing the League of Nations" has recently been started on this continent. Echoes of its propaganda were heard in the last issue of *The Dalhousie Review*.¹ It originated in the United States, among the political partizans of ex-President Wilson, the American

1. It is not the policy of this magazine to prolong controversial discussion on a single problem through successive issues. This is precluded by our limits of space, and by the fact that a journal appearing only once in three months does not lend itself to such a purpose. Owing however to the special importance of the subject, an exception is here made in the case of Dr. Maclellan's rejoinder to Professor Read. A reliable judgment on the League of Nations can be reached only when every possible view has been given a fair hearing. And it is to be distinctly understood that for opinions expressed in any part of this magazine the individual writers are alone responsible. *The Dalhousie Review* accepts responsibility only for judging them of sufficient interest and stated with sufficient power to deserve a place in its pages.—THE EDITOR.

sponsor of the League. Of course it had to be imported into Canada, or we should not have been "up-to-date". Its propagandists are following the usual course of citing in its support the names of certain public men who are more or less well known, and of representing those who do not concur in their aims as not merely non-admirers of the League but also opponents of peace. A writer in the January number of this *Review* seems to have reached the happy conclusion that practically everyone and everything is in favour of the League of Nations, with the exception of "the sneers of the sceptical older generation". If so, why a "movement" for its "popularization"? The older generation is rapidly passing, and the wiser young will soon be able to have their own uninterrupted way. But where is the evidence that the soldiers who fought in the Great War, as well as the young, are all—or a majority of them—believers in the League? And what has faith, or lack of faith, in the League to do with one's attitude towards peace? Practically everyone, it may safely be asserted, is now in favour of peace, and would welcome any really promising means of preserving or promoting it. It is because the League is not regarded as furnishing such a means that it is viewed with more than suspicion by so many. The League's enemies are those who look upon it as an untimely and abortive thing, which has not merely failed, but whose wreckage blocks the way to really effective measures for the prevention of war. As to the "authorities",—Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts—so confidently cited as furnishing conclusive evidence of the merits of the League, "it seems unnecessary to say more" than that the first-named, while admittedly an amiable English gentleman, is usually considered one of the most visionary of public men. Moreover, though formerly supposed to be one of its leading champions, Lord Robert in the late debate on the Speech from the Throne is reported to have "shown himself exceedingly and surprisingly lukewarm with regard to the League". The late Ambassador Page, in one of his letters, relates a conversation which is illuminating as to Lord Robert's personality. In discussing with him American irritation over naval seizures during the early stages of the War, Mr. Page said: "You must not forget the Boston Tea Party, Lord Robert." Lord Robert solemnly replied: "But you must remember, Mr. Page, that I have never been in Boston. I never attended a tea party there!" The alleged opinions of General Smuts with reference to the League might be more impressive if they had been expressed after, instead of before, its constitution, and after—instead of before—the United States had absolutely refused to have anything to do with it.

THE reasons why the United States is standing aloof from the League and why the American people are unalterably opposed to their country's joining it, are definitely stated in an article which appeared in a recent number of *The Nineteenth Century and After*. It was written by Dr. Edward Price Bell, an American resident in London as the European Manager of the Foreign Service of the *Chicago Daily News*, and a very distinguished publicist. Dr. Bell holds it perfectly safe to say that "the United States never will join the League of Nations as constituted by the Covenant of Versailles". He adds:—

On the appearance of this document every American, at all acquainted with the Constitution of his country, saw that the two instruments were not workable together. Every American also should have known that, asked to choose between the Covenant and the Constitution under which they live, Americans would choose their Constitution. Nothing else about the statesmen of Europe ever has surprised Americans so much as did the failure of these statesmen, notwithstanding what Mr. Wilson or anyone else may have said to them, to consider the organic law of the United States as vital. Certain unofficial Englishmen versed in American polity pressed our Constitution upon the notice of certain English statesmen as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the Covenant of Versailles. These critics were assured by those whom they sought to instruct that the American Constitution in the connection indicated was a "mere technicality". One would have supposed that experts in statecraft, whatever their country, would know that of all the instruments of government in the world none is less a "mere technicality" than is the Constitution of the United States of America.

Dr. Bell is unquestionably right. But why need it surprise him that English statesmen should not have assumed to know more about the American Constitution than Mr. Wilson appeared to know? Dr. Bell is not hostile to Mr. Wilson, nor does he say a word against him, although he expresses no doubt as to the ex-President's responsibility for the League and its constitution. All he complains of is that Mr. Wilson gave utterance to different opinions as to the effect of Article X at different times and places in the United States,—opinions at variance with those expressed by him in Europe. He also quotes Mr. Miller, "Mr. Wilson's chief legal adviser at Paris," as disagreeing with him. He contends, too, that the English people were quite as divided as were the Americans in their view of Mr. Wilson and his League. We are reminded how Mr. Keynes and Dr. E. J. Dillon and many others intimated that Mr. Wilson had been hopelessly worsted by the alert and crafty

minds of the Peace Conference, that the wool was pulled over the President's eyes, that his Fourteen Points were torn to shreds and cast to the winds, that he was guilty of the Great Betrayal,—a child, a blind Quixote. Dr. Bell contends that leading British statesmen and journals are still at variance or in doubt as to the interpretation of the Covenant,—whether it constitutes a super-State, how far and in what respects it does or does not override parliamentary and State authority. He declares that, in so far as can be judged from resolutions adopted and published by nearly every public organization of any importance in the United States, from the State Legislatures to the religious and political parties and social associations, practically all the American people are in favour of a League of Nations, while unalterably opposed to *the* League. "Their conception of international co-operation", he says, "is that of an association of free nations, co-operating voluntarily and in the exercise of their sovereignty to spread international understanding and establish peace." Patience, he thinks, will be necessary in the attainment of this ideal,—as indicated in the case of the British Commonwealth of Nations, which, friendly and mutually interested as they are, cannot agree on any definite federal organization. Dr. Bell is hopeful that the American Government will yet take the lead in bringing the nations into accord to prevent war. But he is confident that the United States will never enter the existing League, and—unless they do—what can it accomplish, except to block the way to something better?

THE attitude of some Canadians, and of the Canadian press in general towards those two distinguished natives of the Dominion, Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Beaverbrook, is so extraordinary that it must seem to outsiders almost inexplicable. It is usual, when natives of one country go to another and win the highest positions therein, for their fellow-countrymen to overflow with delight at the credit thus reflected upon themselves. The fame of Joseph's success in Egypt and Mordecai's in Medo-Persia has come down through all the centuries in Jewish literature, and these two were mere royal favourites. When two young men go from the Maritime Provinces of Canada to the heart of the British Commonwealth of Nations,—to the greatest of all cities ancient or modern, the capital of by far the mightiest and most wonderful Empire known to history—and therein win supreme distinction, not through kingly favour or blind chance, but by the will of the whole people and by inborn ability, their fellow-countrymen not only forbear to cheer

but keep stolid silence! It may not be unusual that Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Beaverbrook, as natives of the Maritime Provinces, should be deemed worthy of only passing notice as Canadians in the West. But it is, to say the least, surprising that a Maritime journal when the accession of Mr. Bonar Law to the Premiership was announced, should actually have tried to repudiate our interest in him by declaring that, though his birth in Canada might be "interesting," he was "not a Canadian in any real sense", because "he was taken to the Old Country in childhood by his parents, grew up there, was educated there, and had his whole business and political experience over there". As a matter of fact, Mr. Bonar Law was not taken to Scotland by his parents, both of whom lie buried in Canada. He was no longer a young child when he went to the Old Country. His father was a Presbyterian clergyman long settled in New Brunswick. His mother was a member of one of the oldest and most respected Scottish families in Nova Scotia, with strong footholds in Pictou and Halifax. Cousins of his still reside in Halifax. One cousin died in Pictou less than a year ago. Mr. Bonar Law spent several of his vacations in his boyhood at her father's house in Pictou, and he did not go to Scotland until he was twelve years of age. All his boyish recollections must therefore be of these Provinces. It is safe to say that New Brunswick is still "the home of his heart." Local attachments formed up to the twelfth year are never forgotten, and are usually much stronger than those of a later time. If Mr. Bonar Law is not a Canadian, there are no Canadians. He has won supreme honour for himself and for us by his unaided ability of mind and uprightness of character. He had not the advantages of a college training, but early graduated from the school of trade. Almost unnoticed, he slipped into parliament as a plain business man, and was first observed for his sound practical knowledge and good judgment. Now he is Premier among the Premiers of the world, respected and trusted as well as honoured by all,—all but some Canadians who apparently would disavow him for their country if they could.

THAT Lord Beaverbrook is a Canadian, cannot be disputed. He too is a native of New Brunswick, and the son of an Old Country Presbyterian clergyman. His father was widely known for his ability and culture. Max Aitken came to Halifax in his teens, and laid the foundations of his fortune at an age at which most boys are in school or idly amusing themselves. He is still a young man, only forty-three. In his busiest younger years he was an indefatigable

reader and a serious thinker. When he went to England his abilities received prompt recognition. He was able not only to add rapidly to his fortune, but to win outstanding political distinction as well. In public matters his advice was increasingly sought, and he was soon elected to parliament where his influence fast increased. It is an open secret that he played a leading part in the transfer of the Premiership from Mr. Asquith to Mr. Lloyd George, —a change which admittedly had much to do with greater effectiveness in the War. His personal services both to Canada and to Great Britain during those years were highly valuable. Having succeeded so brilliantly in financial and political fields, Lord Beaverbrook has of late turned his attention to journalism. The London *Daily Express*, under his ownership and direct management, has become one of the leading organs of British public opinion, and he is fast becoming a writer of high merit. By means of the *Daily Express* he did Canada a specially good turn in connection with the removal of the cattle embargo. With youth and energy still on his side, there are few heights to which Lord Beaverbrook may not aspire. Some think that in him the Maritime Provinces may yet give another Premier to the Empire.

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