

A POLICY OF PEACE

GEORGE HAMBLETON

RECENT events have shown that the settlement of Munich is a peace built on shifting sands. The dismemberment of Czecho-Slovakia, the accession of strength to Germany, the weakening of French influence in Central Europe, pogroms and persecutions have left the public mind bewildered and disturbed. That vast feeling of relief which surged over the world when war was averted has given place to questioning whether, after all, the price was not too great; to doubt whether peace can be maintained except by sacrifices beyond the will even of complacent democracy.

In such circumstances, I would submit that the time has come for Canada to adopt a foreign policy at once clear, definite and worthy of the autonomy she has won within the Community of British Nations.

And, above all, a policy of enduring peace.

Returning to a home in the Gatineau Hills, north of Ottawa, after ten years spent in the European turmoil as staff correspondent of the Canadian Press, I have been struck by what (if I may say so without offence) is a curious lack of national consciousness. Local and provincial interests have at times been permitted to push aside the greater interests of the Dominion. In imperial and international affairs, a laudable desire to avoid new commitments has been carried to such extremes as to lead Canada into a path of diminished importance. We tune in to the Downing Street broadcast; but we are not "consulted", for "consultation" would involve some responsibility for the ultimate decision. The common foreign policy theory—a policy in the formulation of which the Dominions would participate—has been discarded. From time to time, at Imperial Conferences and elsewhere, there have been efforts to resurrect it, but the efforts have failed.

Canada now runs the risk of being forced by the logic of foreign policies formulated entirely in Whitehall. The Imperial Conference of 1926, in regard to negotiations between any British Empire government and a foreign state, laid down this rule:

When a Government (of the Empire) has received information of the intention of any other Government (of the Empire) to conduct negotiations, it is incumbent upon it to indicate its attitude with reasonable promptitude. So long as the initiating Government receives no adverse comments, and so long as its policy involves no active obligations on the part of the other Governments, it may proceed on the assumption that its policy is generally acceptable. It must, however, before taking any steps which might involve the other Governments in any active obligations, obtain their definite assent.

Thus, under the rule, Canada cannot theoretically be involved in any active obligations unless she has first given her definite assent.

Yet is there one of us who really believes that if Great Britain had gone to war over Czecho-Slovakia, Canada could have remained neutral? She could have enjoyed the privileges of a neutral only by accepting the obligations of a neutral; and a declaration of neutrality would have been virtually equivalent to a declaration of independence. She might (and probably would) have accepted a state of war without, at the outset, participating to any serious extent. But as the war went on, as Britain called on her own people for greater and greater sacrifices, pressure for active Canadian participation would have increased.

In the end, Canada would have been deeply involved.

Nor would a policy of isolation from the affairs of Europe provide adequate security for a country like Canada of large, undeveloped, ill-defended territories. It is, to my mind, a delusion to imagine that if liberties are lost over large areas of Europe, three thousand miles of sea will preserve freedom in Canada. No one tried harder than President Wilson to keep the United States out of the World War. Was there not such a thing as being too proud to fight? In the long run, pressure of events drove the United States into the field.

Canada's foreign policy should aim at a double objective:

(1) In the first place, closest possible association between the United States, Great Britain and France. They still remain the great upholders of democracy. Together, they are overwhelmingly strong at sea. They have the greatest air power, the greatest reserve of man power, the greatest wealth. With Russia, they control the great supplies of oil.

(2) In the second place, we should seek to restore a League, wider, more embracing than the present League, learning from the

lessons of the past that it is better to remove the cause of quarrels than to try to settle quarrels when parties to the dispute are already at daggers drawn.

Yet while the new League should endeavour above all things to remove the cause of war, there should remain a collective reserve power to be employed if any buccaneering nation, despite conciliation, is determined to run amok. It would be infinitely better to rely on good-will and conciliation as preventatives of war. A negotiated peace is infinitely better than an imposed peace. But the weakness of a purely consultative League lies in the fact that if conciliation breaks down, as it will break down if an aggressor is determined to use force, it has no remedy.

There is an impression abroad that sanctions came into being with the Covenant of the League, that Sanctions will disappear with collective security. The impression is quite erroneous. Sanctions, under the League Covenant, correspond to penalty clauses of national law. They are the fine for ignoring the international speed limit. Sanctions, in one form or another, are no new feature of international relations. During the last century, all great European powers resorted to the pacific blockade as a means of enforcing their will. By use of their naval power, they, without going to war, stopped the sea trade of the offending nation.

The first blockade of the kind was in 1827 when England, France and Russia blockaded the coasts of Turkey. Since then, there have been twenty pacific blockades. France and Britain are the countries which employed the pacific blockade most frequently. France comes first, with thirteen blockades; England next, with twelve. Italy adopted the pacific blockade on six occasions; Germany and Russia on four; Austria-Hungary on three. These pacific blockades were all forms of Sanction.

It is important to note, too, that the states pacifically blockaded were all either secondary or militarily weak states. It was always the big fellow who blockaded the little fellow. The little fellow could not afford to take the risk of trying to blockade the big fellow. In 1923, an Italian delegate sent to delimit the Albanian frontier was killed. Mussolini held the Greek Government responsible, and bombarded Corfu. That bombardment was a Sanction, although it had nothing to do with the League Covenant. When the Russian Government arrested British engineers on a charge of attempting to wreck the five-

year plan, the British Government, to secure their release, imposed an embargo on imports from Russia. That embargo was a Sanction. But it had nothing to do with the League Covenant.

When Spanish Government aircraft dropped bombs on the German cruiser *Deutschland* in May 1937, German warships bombarded Almeria, killing 19 and wounding 55. That bombardment was a Sanction. Again the League had no connection with it whatever.

When Hitler issued demand after demand on Schuschnigg, and reinforced his demands by seizing Austria, that was Sanction not only worse than any Sanction contemplated by the League Covenant, but, in the words of Lord Halifax, British Foreign Secretary, "it was a ruthless application of power politics." "The world," Lord Halifax told the House of Lords, "has been brought face to face with the extremely ugly truth that neither treaty texts nor international law have any influence with power politics and that, in that sphere, force and force alone decides."

When, finally, Hitler issued an ultimatum to Czechoslovakia which shocked public opinion all over the world, and earned the "bitter reproaches" of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, his threat of war was a threat of Sanctions which were both outside the League Covenant and more sweeping than any Sanctions ever contemplated at Geneva.

There is this vital difference between Sanctions as contemplated in Article XVI of the League Covenant and the bombardments and threats of war by bullying powers: League sanctions can be imposed only after every effort has been made to conciliate differences, and only on a member which has resorted to war in disregard of its covenants. They represent the last effort to restore the rule of law. Sanctions as applied by great Powers to small represent the triumph not of Law but of Force.

In these days of storm and stress, one often hears it said that because the application of economic and financial Sanctions failed to prevent the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, the whole League system of collective security has failed, and that all that remains to us is an arms race which if continued at its present *tempo* will end in economic collapse. Geneva is dismissed as the meeting-place of a lot of quaint cranks with no knowledge of realities, whose fantastic meddling in matters they don't understand will turn little wars into big wars.

Those who make that criticism forget that the League is not a super-state issuing orders and decrees to member-states. The League is scarcely more or less than an international co-operative, acting in virtue of the decisions of its members. If the League fails, it is because its members fail; and, for that failure, all members (including Canada) must take their share of responsibility. Chief delegates at Geneva, moreover, are members of governments, or act under the instructions of governments. They do not become less virtuous or more virtuous because they cross Juras from France into Switzerland.

One difference there is: at Geneva, they work in the white light of an intense publicity which usually reveals their moves and counter-moves. If they work through "regular diplomatic channels", there is less publicity. Public opinion, less informed, exercises a less effective restraint.

Over the last ten years, we have witnessed such a decline in international morality as no decade, in all probability, has witnessed before. Ten years ago, the spirit of Locarno—the spirit of conciliation and mutual understanding—ruled international relations. Nations almost vied in their eagerness to sign the Kellogg Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. The League of Nations was growing in strength and effectiveness. Millions of signatures were showered on Geneva, wishing God-speed to the great world conference called to discuss reduction in armaments.

Now, treaties are broken with impunity. Power politics and the law of the jungle have taken the place of equity and justice. New and ever-greater demands are made on the taxpayer, in vain effort to satisfy the ravenous appetite of an armaments Frankenstein. Yet with all our sacrifices, it is not by any means certain that we are gaining in relative strength (and relative strength is the strength that counts) even as against Germany. For the seizure of Austria and the dismemberment of Czecho-Slovakia have weakened France and strengthened Germany. Germany is driving her way down the Danube. Czecho-Slovakia, once sturdy and virile, is little more than a German vassal; her foreign policy gravitates towards the Rome-Berlin axis.

As a first objective of Canada's foreign policy, I have suggested closest possible association between the United States, Great Britain and France. In that association lies the safeguard of democracy. But to attempt to convert that association

into a Triple Alliance of Democracy would be merely ranging bloc against bloc and fatal to peace. It would be an effective barrier against international blackmail, but, in itself, it is not enough.

Behind it there must lie a Society of Nations where all states, great and small, will find fair play and justice. Germany is not the only offender in international crime. Italy was not the first modern state to found an Empire. Big armaments—however necessary they may be in this international chaos—cannot alone ensure an equitable peace.

Creation of such a Society of Nations may seem a dim and distant ideal. But if mankind is ever to advance beyond jungle law, with guns as the last argument of kings, then the ideal of to-day must become the reality of tomorrow. In the realization of that ideal, Canada can and should play an effective part.