

in than the League of Nations. The idea of the aims and objects of the League is gradually percolating through Australia, and there is a very strong feeling growing up there that the League of Nations has at least got the germ of a hope to maintain peace in the world. I am confident that Australia would take any action it could to promote the authority of the League of Nations, and to give it every opportunity to go forward and grow in strength and become the great instrument that those who brought it into being had in mind. I think that Australia's demand for some voice in the foreign policy of the Empire is, to a very great extent, directly traceable to the League of Nations and Australia's interest in its objects.

Australia stands for Peace and Support of League.

It has been very well put by Lord Robert Cecil, to whom we are very grateful for the information he has given, that Britain's foreign policy is peace. Australia's foreign policy would certainly be peace; and, quite apart from any apprehensions, which I may have appeared to suggest that we had, of being involved in war without our consent, we also feel that, after the late tragic war, we have a responsibility to try to do our share in promoting peace in the world, and Australia believes that the foundation of Britain's foreign policy should certainly be to support the League of Nations and make its authority as great and world-wide as is possible. In the debate which took place in Australia with regard to these Conferences the view was expressed that one of the greatest tasks that lay to our hand was to see whether this Conference, representative of the whole Empire, could not really do something towards ensuring the peace of the world and solving some of the very serious problems we are faced with to-day. The people of Australia take a very strong view of this matter; and I am sure they would say, almost with a united voice, that they do believe in the League of Nations, and that all our actions ought to be directed towards trying to promote its power, its force, and its authority in the world.

Need for Discretion.

There are one or two things, however, that I think I ought to say. We are enthusiastically in favour of the League, but we think that the League ought to show great discretion, and very great discretion, in the next few years, certainly in the period of its infancy. If the League tries to go too far and too fast, and to achieve all the objects it has in view in too short a time, I think it will defeat its own ends.

Progress already made, and Prospects for the Future.

Personally I think very great progress, considering the time the League has been in existence, has already been made, and I am quite certain that that progress will be accelerated and that we may be a little surprised at what the League can accomplish. I recognize, of course, that the League of Nations is never going to do what we hope while there are great nations outside it; but there is no reason, because certain nations to-day do not see that they can join the League, why we should think that the League should not go on and that the case is hopeless. The position will probably improve in the future, and the one thing we have got to bear in mind is to keep the League in existence, keep it functioning; and whether it is this League, or a greater League that will spring up in a few years, we have to keep its idea alive. We saw very clearly that it was imperative when the tragic sufferings of the war were very close to us, which many of us rather seem to have forgotten. The League should be kept alive because, if this League goes, we have no hope of establishing anything of the sort until we have been through another world tragedy of the same character as that which our generation has seen. The next world tragedy of that character is going to be a tragedy one-hundredfold worse than the one we have experienced. So that, although Australia is enthusiastically behind the idea of the League of Nations, it does not think that the League at this stage, in its infancy, can ensure the peace of the world, but it believes that, if the League is given opportunity to grow, there is the germ here of the one thing that may ensure the great object we all have, to maintain the peace of the world.

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND.

Appreciation of Lord Robert Cecil's Statement.

Mr. Massey: I would just like to say, by way of introduction, Prime Minister, how much I appreciate the very plain and straightforward statement that we have had this morning. I think if even part of Lord Robert Cecil's statement is published it will go a long way to clear the atmosphere which has undoubtedly been created by recent events. I wish also to say how much I sympathize with Lord Robert Cecil in what has recently taken place.

For years past he has given practically the whole of his efforts, and the whole of his energy, and the whole of his ability, to the business of the League of Nations, from the commencement right up to now. I know that he must have been disappointed with some of the criticisms—at which I am surprised myself—and with some of the misrepresentations—which are worse than criticisms—that have been given utterance to by men who ought to have known better.

Personal Opinion of Value of League.

In saying that, I am bound to admit that I have never been quite an enthusiastic supporter of the League. But, with regard to what has taken place, my own opinion is that too much was expected from the League, and I think that some of the more ardent supporters of the League are themselves to blame for the feeling that has been created. The idea that was created was this: that the operations of the League would prevent war. I never thought so. I do not think for a moment