Almost meticulous care has been shown, and rightly shown, to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of any member of the League. Nothing of the kind has ever been done. Nothing of the kind could ever be proposed with the slightest hope of success to the Council or Assembly. On the other hand, work of a really essential value has been done in a great number of different directions. An immense quantity of humanitarian work has been done. I am not going to weary you with details, but you have not forgotten, I am sure you have not, the magnificent work done by Dr. Nansen in the re-patriation of more than 350,000 prisoners of war, suffering every kind of hardship and misery in Russia (applause); work that really would not have been possible, would not have been dimly possible, if some organ of international co-operation, which enabled the nations of the world to put at Dr. Nansen's disposal their resources and authority for that purpose, had not existed.

I need not go into all the other questions; the fight against disease; the various efforts to stamp out social evils; efforts very largely successful, and enormously promising; or to take the more strictly political aspect of the League, the aspect which deals with international dis-
putes. I referred to one the other evening, the Albanian dispute. There are three or four others, at least as important, and at least as difficult. One is constantly cited as an instance of the ineffectiveness of the League action, the dispute between Poland and Lithuania about the possession of the City of Vilna. On the contrary, I think it is one of the strongest notes showing how admirable the general principles of the work of the League are, and the methods of the covenants are, and how ineffective and objectionable other methods of international action appear.

What happened? I won't go through all the details, but, shortly, it is this: Lithuania was in possession of Vilna, and thought she had a right to it. Poland had undoubtedly a very considerable historic claim. The parties met. The Poles asked the League to deal with it, and while they were dealing with it, or on the point of dealing with it, a Polish general occupied it, without the authority, as it was said, of the Polish Government. The League thereupon took endless trouble to draw up some scheme which would do justice to Lithuania and satisfy the apprehensions and national feelings of Poland.

I am not going into the details, but after endless
troubles, such a scheme was drawn up. It returned Vilna to Lithuania. It provided certain compensations, or, rather, satisfactions for Poland, and whether every detail of it was right or not, I have myself very little doubt that if it had been put in force, the question would have been satisfied and satisfied with complete justice to all the people. What happened? Owing to the--how shall I put it with due courtesy?--the peculiar characteristics of some of those who live in those parts--both nations rejected the proposal and in consequence of course it was quite impossible to enforce it, as both had rejected it. If one had accepted it, if Lithuania, for instance, had accepted it, it would then have been a matter of obligation on the part of Poland not to attempt to resort to war against the settlement which had been arrived at unanimously by the Council and the Assembly and accepted by Lithuania.

Unfortunately, they did not accept it. That was not the fault of the League, and the matter has, I understand, now been settled in a very different way, and a way which, to my mind, is far less fraught with justice, by the only other existing international authority, the Council of Ambassadors, that is, the Council representing the Allied Powers.

That does not seem to me to be any criticism of the
League. On the contrary, it shows that League settlements are dictated by a strict regard for justice, without considering the supposed prejudices not only of the countries concerned, but of every great country, of all the great countries which are always, without a doubt, prejudiced in these particular questions. But the League decided impartially what they thought was right in the main against the Polish contention, and it was only because that decision was rejected by both sides that you had to go to another tribunal, which, in effect, conceded almost all that Poland demanded.

Well, there are other cases which are at least as typical of the action of the League, but one that I may mention is the Austrian rehabilitation. Here you have a very different kind of operation of the League, but an operation which could not possibly have been carried out without the existence of some such body as the League. You have Austria on the verge of collapse, having approached the Supreme Council and getting no satisfaction, being sent by the Supreme Council of the Allies to the League, only as a last resort, as forlorn hope, to see whether anything could be done.
Consider the difficulty. Austria in a most difficult economic position, with the relatively gigantic city of Vienna of two million inhabitants, and a little state left to support it of only five or six millions altogether, deprived by the fortunes of war and by the Treaty of practically all their resources, or the greater part, driven by economic causes and by unfriendly no doubt weak governments farther and farther down the slope, until its currency had practically become vanished; surrounded by nations who undoubtedly are credited with being rivals to one another, and to a large extent looking with covetous eyes, some of them, on the remaining possessions of Austria.

That was the situation, a terribly difficult one. It comes to the League. It comes to the atmosphere of Geneva. The Australian delegation, for Austria is a member of the League, comes before the Assembly. It asks for the assistance of the Assembly. Thereupon man after man, representing country after country, rises and says "We are all agreed that the Austrian plight is most terrible. We are all agreed that something must be done to help her. We are all agreed to put aside our prejudices and our immediate interests, even, and come to the assistance of a suffering sister state". (Applause)
I heard the declarations myself, and very impressive they were, and they were not mere declarations. They were followed by action; small committees appointed by the Council to look into the matter, four or five representatives of some of the most interested states. They draw up a scheme. The first chapter of it is a solemn undertaking that none of the surrounding countries will attempt to utilize the misfortunes of Austria for their own aggrandizement or enrichment, a self-denying order. Then a proposal that Austria shall put her finances in order as far as she can. Then an offer that, if she will agree to do that, a loan shall be raised on the credit of all the surrounding countries, and offers sufficient to tide her over the period which will intervene before she can re-establish her finances on a sound footing.

And finally, with the assent of Austria, a comptroller, a single representative of all these nations, drawn from a neutral country, Holland, is appointed, not to control Austrian sovereignty; not to hamper her actions; but having control of the loan of money to be able to take precautions that it is utilized in a thoroughly business-like and remunerative fashion, that is to say, that it is only advanced in return for such reform, financial reforms, as will
make it possible for it to be really useful to Austria.

All this is agreed upon within three or four weeks, a negotiation which even an optimistic imagination may have thought possible under all conditions, and would have taken unquestionably months and months and probably years to complete, and by that time Austria would have ceased to exist, carried through with great rapidity and great technical efficiency, immediately put in force, Austrian hopes reviving, Austrian people pulling themselves together. Without attempting to go over every feature, the crown ceased its downward career at once; savings in the savings banks rapidly increase.

End of Take F
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The yield of taxes becomes much greater, reforms are carried honestly forward, officials are dismissed, a better system of treasury administration is instituted; and now some months after this scheme has been put into force, every one who is capable of forming a judgment is beginning to be confident that we really have saved Austria, saved it not by the selfless action of these old world states that I sometimes hear reviled, but by the selfless and enlightened altruism which sees that the salvation of a sister state is in the highest interest of all the others (applause).

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have given you two or three instances — and they might be multiplied indefinitely — of the actual working of the League; and do not be misled by verbal and minute criticism of this or that article into forming a judgment on a subject that is now capable of being investigated in a much sounder and more scientific spirit. After all the League is no sudden fancy of a few negotiators collected at Paris. It has a long history behind it. Some such scheme has been the aspiration of every man of good will since history began. Many attempts have been made from time to time to establish a plan of that kind. They have failed, and failed largely for two reasons,
either because they had no real organization or machinery which made the practical propositions, or because they did not recognize that you can only save people by their own will, that you can only bring nations to co-operate by persuading them of the value of co-operation, and that you cannot do anything much, that you cannot get forward particularly by trying to impose the will of one state or a group of states on other free and independent nations (applause). That seems to me to have been the error of our adversaries in the late war. I do not myself hold the view that the German policy before the war was dictated by mere brutal lust of conquest, or even by a senseless wish for domination. I believe the best German thought saw the evils of the international situation as we saw them, and persuaded itself that the remedy was by forcing what they honestly believed was the best system of civilization, the German system of civilization, on the rest of the world. The attempt failed, as all such attempts have failed, and I hope even if it were made by my own country, all such attempts in the future will fail. I am a believer, hereditarily, traditionally, nationally, in freedom. Freedom is the condition of progress, and that is true not only of the state itself, but of the whole
body and family of states alike. I do not wish to see any domination of my own country or any other country over the other states of the world. I do not want to see the domination even of any combination of states, however great and however extensive. I believe you must teach the nations, and you must allow them to seek out their own salvation, merely enabling them to co-operate together, to join with one another in what is clearly for the interest of all, namely the preservation of peace and the improvement of international fellowship and brotherhood. That is the real line on which progress is possible in international affairs.

H1 I am told I am an idealist. I am not ashamed of for being an idealist, if idealism is the only thing that has ever accomplished anything worth having in the world (applause). Idealism, as your chairman justly said was at the back of Magna Charta, was at the back of the Petition of Rights, was at the back of the Bill of Rights, may I not humbly say it was at the back of your own Constitution. If idealism means impractical and vague aspiration for something good without attempting to show the way in which that good can be accomplished, then I deny in total
that the authors of the covenant were idealists in that sense. They were idealists, at least I hope, but they were practical idealists. They had a great idea, a great aspiration, and they did their best to embody that aspiration and that idea in practical provisions of a well considered document, and I hope, by the assistance of heaven, their efforts will not be unavailing for the great objects which they had in view. (Applause)

End of address.)
ADDRESS

of

LORD ROBERT CECIL

at

LEAGUE OF NATIONS NON-PARTISAN ASSOCIATION

Membership Conference Dinner

Colony Club, New York City,

April 4, 1923.

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LORD ROBERT CECIL: Mr. Colby, Ladies and Gentlemen:
Let me in the first place thank you all for the kindness
of your reception. Let me especially thank Mr. Colby
for the kindness of his observations. Many of the things
that he said embarrassed me greatly, but perhaps none more
than the suggestion that I was a Field Marshal. I am
afraid he is doing me a great deal too much honor. I am
not a Field Marshal. I am not even a simple soldier. I
come here merely not to lead any attack, not to assist in
to your country and to tell them such things as I can
tell them about the working of the League of Nations and
the hopes that those who believe in that movement have
cherished as to its future.

Since my arrival here, the thing that has most im-
pressed me has been the immense interest which every
symptom shows is felt by your public in this question.
That is no new experience for me. I have had the honor
of making a very large number of speeches to a tolerant
public at home. So have a great many of my friends and
associates, and we have found throughout the length and
breadth of my own country that, however dead may be the
public mind, however exhausted it may be, with ordinary
political questions, a reference to this country always
aroused their interest, and men and still more women
were anxious to hear an account of this movement, this one
hope that was held out to them that they might be able
and that their children after them might be able to avoid
the terrible experiences through which we all went during
the recent years.

Therefore it was nothing surprising to me to find how
much interest the League excites here, and I found another
thing which was surprising to me, and shows my profound ignorance, and that was what a very large measure of agreement there seemed to be on the general international question. I do not mean on the particular positions as to the League, but on the general attitude which you thought should be taken by your country in reference to international co-operation.

End of Take
I may be entirely wrong, but judging only by what I have heard and what I have read, I should imagine that there was a very general agreement that in this world, at this stage of its history, it is quite impossible for any nation to remain in complete isolation from all the rest. I noticed in the observations which your chairman has just made a reference to a very distinguished countryman of yours, Senator Borah; and that reminded me that I have recently been reading several most interesting utterances of that distinguished statesman. If I understand the resolution which he presented, the text of which was sent to me the other day, he admits as fully as any one that isolation is not a practical policy, and that some measure of international co-operation must be devised for the peaceful conduct of world affairs, and he puts forward some very interesting—and if I may be permitted without impertinence to say so—very valuable proposals. In the first place he proposes, as I understand him, to outlaw war. And there, if I follow, he suggests two practical proposals. He wants first a general international declaration that the abolition of war is desirable. For my part I most heartily agree in the desirability of that step, and I think I said the other
day in one of the speeches which I am sorry to say are getting already numerous in your very large suffering country, that I would desirously regard an amendment to the covenant which would make it clear that the policy of the League, one of the objects of the League was the elimination of war, and a very desirable change in that document (applause).

He next proposes to make any instigator of war, to request as I understand it all countries to make any instigator of war guilty of a crime. That is a very interesting proposal, and I should be very much interested to hear more of it, and to see how it is going to be worked out. I admit that there are certain superficial difficulties, but I hoped that they might be got over; but, whether that is the best method of carrying out the Senator's desire, the thing that seems to me much more important than the detail of this or that particular piece of machinery, is to recognize that here at any rate we have a very - it would be impertinent of me to praise him, but a very well known remarkable outstanding citizen of your country declaring that in his judgment war instead of being an international
which probably exist as a result of the treaty and which certainly will develop whether they exist now as the years go on and as conditions change (applause).

One other proposal of the Senator is certainly very interesting. In order to give a foundation for the action of his court he proposes the codification of international law. I am charged sometimes with being an impractical idealist, but I am very much afraid that if we are to wait for any improvement in the international system until the nations of the world have been got to agree to a general codification of international law, then I am afraid the youngest of us will not see the establishment of the new system (laughter). That is in many respects deplorable but one must recognize the fact that to codify international law is a tremendous job and one which I think would defy the efforts of almost any one that lives at the present time.

I do not mean by that that we should be content with the present chaotic system. I quite agree we should move to a more rational system of international law, one which would define it gradually and would make it perfect, and that is one of the many reasons why I personally welcome the establishment of a permanent court of international justice,
because I believe as the goes on it will build up a system of jurisprudence, brick by brick, precedent by precedent, until you have gradually overspread the world with a sound practical system of law such as our common law has given to us (applause).

Other proposals have been made which I have had the honor of reading, for the movement of international organization. I do not propose to trouble by any attempt to analyze them all. Two or three of them depend on proposals for the entry of your country into the League, either completely, or as associate member, after some modification of the covenant. Those are all matters for you to consider, interesting matters, and I can only repeat as I said the other night that I am quite satisfied that any proposal that you thought right to make for co-operation with the other nations in the League in any form would be considered with every desire to meet you by the other countries already in the League (applause).

One article is so often mentioned that perhaps I might be allowed to mention one word about it, and that is Article X. Now I am afraid I am in the unhappy position of agreeing with nobody about Article X (laughter). There are those who regard it as of immense value, and those who regard it
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as exceedingly pernicious. I am afraid I do not regard
it in either light. I think it has some value as a
declaration going in the direction of a declaration against
wars of aggression, but it does not do it very plainly or
clearly.

(end of take)
So far I think it admirable, but it is thought to
go further than that, and to impose on the members of the
League the obligation to take military action if its earlier
provisions are broken. I am afraid I cannot read it in
that way; whether that is a good thing or a bad thing, I
don't think it imposes any such obligation, moral or legal,
and I do not myself think that it would be wise or proper
or practical to attempt any such obligation; but I really
wanted in mentioning it only to say this, that people have
often asked me whether great importance is attached to that
article by the members of the League, so great importance
that if by any chance your country were to propose to enter
the League on condition that Article 10 were withdrawn,
those countries would not agree to such a change. Well,
that is a matter which I agree is a matter of speculation.
I can only express my own view, that the countries would be
quite ready to withdraw that article if that were the only
obstacle to your co-operation. (Cries of "Hear, hear" and
applause).

Now, that is not, of course, by any means the only
criticism that is made on the Covenant, and I am fully con-
scious that if you take that document, or indeed any other
document, particularly any document written in the English
language, you will be able to make very plausible criticisms of it, because among other things, it is almost impossible to write in English any sentence which is not capable of at least two different meanings -- at least, that is my unhappy experience after a good many attempts at drafting, and indeed you can make criticisms of this or that article of the Covenant. What I want is to press once again on all those critics, and on everyone, not to indulge in that most fascinating, but as it seems to me most useless form of intellectual occupation, verbal criticism. Let them instead of that look rather at what the actual working and practice of the League is. Before the League had begun to practice, it was very reasonable indeed to take this article or that article and say that might be used in such and such a way so as to create great dangers either to particular countries or to the general international body. But now we have got actual experience, and I do appeal very strongly to those who wish to criticize the Covenant, to consider the action of the League. I say that it is really incontestable that the League has functioned, has functioned well, has done a lot of admirable work, and that, as far as I know, none of the difficulties that are ordinarily foreseen have in fact cropped up.
You do not find any infringement of the sovereignty or independence of the members of the League, there is not a single one of the fifty-two who would admit that it was in the least less sovereign and independent after it entered the League than before it entered the League. (Applause)

End of Take