

79

The
League of Nations Union :
What It Has Done and Is Doing.

THE League of Nations Union is a British society, supported entirely by public subscriptions, formed for the purpose of educating, and making effective, British public opinion with regard to the League of Nations as an association of States for the promotion of international co-operation and the maintenance of peace.

The Union was formed on October 13th, 1918, by the amalgamation of two previously existing societies, which, during the concluding years of the war had been working for the establishment of a League of Nations as one of the fruits of peace. Representative men and women of every school of religious and political thought joined it and became honorary office-holders. Amongst these may be mentioned the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Clynes, and Mr. G. N. Barnes; together with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Admiral Beatty, the Lord Chancellor, the Viceroy of India, Cardinal Bourne, the President of the Free Church Council and the Chief Rabbi. The activities of the Union are principally directed by two of the greatest living statesmen, Lord Grey of Fallodon, its President, and Lord Robert Cecil, its Chairman of Executive.

At the time of its foundation the membership of the Union was about 3,000. At the beginning of 1920 this had increased to 10,000. To-day it stands at more than 125,000, and is increasing rapidly. Since its foundation the Union has organised over 3,000 public meetings. In 1919 about 400 were held. During 1920 there have been approximately 1,400 of which no less than 400 were held during the months of November and December. During the present year meetings have averaged over 200 per month.

The purpose of these meetings is to reach as many people as possible with a direct message concerning the League, and to retain and extend their interest by making them members of the Union. It is estimated that, through its meetings, the Union has reached not far short of 1,000,000 adult members of our com-

munity with an explanation of the constitution and powers of the League; and these audiences have expressed enthusiastic adherence to the League's ideals. So long as this result is only regarded as a beginning, it is encouraging. But the Union will not feel that it has begun to break the back of its task until it has carried its message to the whole of our adult population, and until the membership of the Union itself is numbered not in tens of thousands, but in millions.

The network of the Union is spread over the country in the form of "regions" and "branches." The regions, of which there are nine correspond approximately to the groups of counties served by the various modern universities and university colleges. The branches are increasing with rapidity. In the beginning of the year 1920 there were 138. There are now over 600 branches, and the number is growing at the rate of one each day. This total, taken in conjunction with the figures of membership, shows the Union as an organisation of recruiting stations, each averaging in strength about 200 pioneer members who carry the ideals of the League amongst their neighbours, gaining converts with steadily increasing success. Not every member is an active member, or such an organisation would speedily embrace all except the sceptics (of whom there are comparatively few) and the opponents of the League (of whom there are less). But it is found that the members of the Union take a growing interest in international affairs, and, by meetings arranged locally within the branches, make a serious effort to keep themselves informed on League subjects.

There is also a political side to the work of the Union. A Committee of experts in foreign affairs meets weekly to examine the international situation with a view to advising the members of the Union whether the League in any given situation could or ought to take action. A Mandates Sub-Committee has considered and prepared memoranda and drafts on this subject with a view to facilitating the final settlement of the terms of the Mandates. The "'B' class" Mandate drafted by this Committee was very favourably commented upon at the Assembly of the League, and was recommended to the Council as a model. Foreign Sub-Committees, composed of nationals of the various States in the League,

have been formed to supplement the Intelligence Service of the Union with expert advice regarding conditions in their respective countries, and to enable the closest touch to be maintained with the similar voluntary societies for the League (70 in number) in other countries. Instances in which the political work of the Union has borne fruit were the adoption, by the Council of the League, of the proposal to send a Commission of Enquiry to Russia, and the proposal for the International Financial Conference, first made by Lord Robert Cecil on a Union platform. The League of Nations Union through its Parliamentary Committee succeeded in securing the amendments of the Nauru Bill: the Government measure for the administration of the island in the Pacific taken over from Germany under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The amendment provided that the island should be administered in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations. Further the Armaments Sub-Committee of the Union has to its credit that it is the first body to put forward practical proposals for general reduction in armaments.

Moreover, the Union has met with considerable success in organising press and literary propaganda on behalf of the League. On Armistice Day, 1919, something in the neighbourhood of 200 articles relative to the League were placed in the daily press. Pronouncements by Mr. Arthur Balfour, Lord Grey, Lord Robert Cecil, and M. Leon Bourgeois (the French representative on the Council of the League) have at various times been given wide press publicity. Manifestoes of the Executive Committee on international questions have also been widely published. Furthermore, the Union has successfully carried on magazines which have received commendation not only in this country but from all parts of the Continent; and a large number of explanatory pamphlets have been prepared and published, of which one, "The Covenant Explained," is recognised as the best popular exposition of the subject now on the market. An authoritative work on the achievements of the first Assembly of the League has been published through Macmillan & Co., price 3s. 6d., postage 3d. extra.

On January 10th, 1921, the first anniversary of the League, a most successful publicity campaign was

launched in the press, with the result that almost all of the principal newspapers devoted considerable editorial space to the subject of the League. A film of the Assembly was issued last year, and attempts are now being made to prepare a film showing all the various activities of the League.

The celebration of the first anniversary of the League included the organisation and holding of public meetings and other celebrations by nearly one hundred of the branches; whilst in London a mass meeting addressed by Lord Grey, Lord R. Cecil, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Barnes and Mr. Clynes, and at which the League film was exhibited, was held at the Albert Hall. Over 1,000 new members were enrolled at this meeting.

On June 25th a great open air demonstration took place in Hyde Park, after which deputations from the branches placed emblems on the Cenotaph and on the Unknown Soldier's Tomb.

All these activities are in the nature of adult education: the mobilisation of adult public opinion. So also is the organisation of the formation of Study Circles, of which the number is increasing daily, and the organisation of such summer schools as those which met last July and August under the auspices of the Union. In the long run, however, it is the education of adolescence that is of the greatest importance. This is the great future work of the Union, and in time will overshadow all its other functions. The aim in this behalf is to present all knowledge, and especially history and geography, in the light of the new international ideals of the League of Nations.

Such is a bird's-eye view of the Union and its work. *There is no shadow of doubt that, largely owing to these activities, the ideals of the League have taken a strong hold upon the imagination of the British people.* It is for the Union to ensure, and if it is able to obtain financial support, *it can and will ensure*, that those ideals become inseparably interwoven with the fundamental British ideals of civilised government.

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