

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION.

EXTRACT FROM THE SPEECH OF THE

RT. HON.

LORD ROBERT CECIL,

K.C., M.P.,

TO THE

ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE

AT

GENEVA, ON NOVEMBER 17TH, 1920.

I WAS thinking this morning that I am, perhaps, in my own person an example—a rather striking example—of the success of a bold policy of reconciliation. I am here to represent South Africa, and I represent South Africa because the Prime Minister of South Africa, who unquestionably represents the wishes and the feelings of his people in this matter, was good enough to think that I could, more adequately than anyone else, present to the Assembly the views which he held. In a very real sense I stand before you as a substitute for General Smuts. Think of that. General Smuts not so many years ago was one of the most redoubtable and successful Commanders of the Forces of the Boer nation when they were in arms against the British Empire, and I was the son of the Prime Minister who conducted the war on behalf of the British Empire. And yet it now comes about that the General of the Boers goes to the son of the British Prime Minister and asks him to appear before the Assembly of the League of Nations as the best exponent of the General's views on international subjects. How has that result come about? Not by timidity, not by shrinking from a bold action, but by a great act of trust in the Boer people, an act which I do not hesitate to say at the moment seemed to me rash and perhaps premature, but which has more than justified itself by its results. Surely that is an example to us. Do not let us be afraid. Do not let us shrink from even strong measures of pacification and reconciliation. Believe me, they will justify themselves in the future. I will say to this Assembly, with all the emphasis at my command, let their motto be :—" Be just and fear not." (*Loud applause.*)

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