

PEACE BALLOT

THE FINAL FIGURES

LAST NIGHT'S ALBERT HALL MEETING

The final figures of the peace ballot were announced last night at a meeting held in the Albert Hall under the chairmanship of Lord Cecil. An audience which filled the hall in every part cheered enthusiastically the announcement that nearly 12,000,000 votes had been recorded, with large affirmative majorities on every question.

Lord Cecil said that when the plan for a ballot was started 15 months ago many prudent counsellors feared it would be a "fizzle"—a few hundred thousand votes. He was sanguine and hoped for about 5,000,000. In fact, they had got 11,627,765.

This number (Lord Cecil went on to say) was not evenly distributed. Apart from London, where very special conditions prevailed, it varied from 12 per cent. of the possible total in King's Lynn up to 86 per cent. in Montgomeryshire. Wales had been marvellous, with an average poll of 62 per cent., and 10 constituencies better than the best in the neighbouring kingdom. Scotland, particularly in the East and in the Islands, as well as Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the North of England generally were also very good.

On each of the six questions there was a very large majority for an answer in the affirmative. On questions 1, 2, 4, and 5A it was from 92 per cent. to 97 per cent., or from 12 to 1 to 33 to 1. On question 3 the majority was between 4 and 5 to 1, and on question 5B (military sanctions) about 3 to 1. On every one of the first five questions the number of affirmative answers was larger than that of the votes given for any single party in any General Election, except that in the last abnormal election the votes given for the Conservatives were just greater. One other fact was worth noting. Whether in any constituency there was a large poll or a small poll, the majorities of the votes given remained pretty much the same, the inference being that the votes given were a fair sample of the opinion of the whole electorate, and that, if more votes had been given, the proportion of "ayes" to "noes" would have been unaltered. His foreign friends were delighted at the result. Whether they would imitate the ballot or not he did not know. But that was not the main point. They now knew where the people of this country stood. That was even more important than the opinions of the Government. Governments would come and go, but as long as the people stood for support of the League that must be the national policy.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY said that the results of the ballot were most remarkable, and they would do well to press upon the Government, upon their M.P.s, and upon their fellow-citizens that 12,000,000 people had recorded that decisive vote. It was an intelligent vote. He noted from the variation of the answers given to different questions that there was no mechanical writing down of "Yes" or "No."

The result was primarily a great declaration of faith in the League of Nations. Crabbing the League had been a fashionable pursuit for some time. What was needed was the incoming of a great volume of opinion to show that in this country at least, whatever the temporary difficulties might be, whatever accommodations had to be made to the real facts of the situation, the League was to stand. (Cheers.)

There were of course other significant features of the ballot. Nearly 10,000,000 people voted in favour of the all-round reduction of armaments by agreement. It might be necessary in this most difficult matter, in the light of recent disappointing experience, to approach this great question from fresh angles and new points of view. It might be that it was through regional pacts of non-aggression and the greater sense of security which they might bring that it might be possible to approach afresh the beginnings of a limitation and then a reduction of armaments. That was not the kind of matter that need concern them. What they were concerned about was to see that from whatever angle the problem was approached, whatever new starting points could be made, the great conception of the limitation and then the all-round reduction of armaments could not be shelved. He hoped this vote would be regarded by the Government as at once a call and an encouragement to take a lead and to see that by every possible means it was made plain that at least in this country this was a goal which must be insistently and incessantly followed. (Cheers.) To the question whether if necessary military measures should be taken against an aggressor more than 6,000,000 people replied in the affirmative. Without some such assurance as this, it was really impossible to insist upon the carrying out of what was called the collective system.

This declaration (the Archbishop continued) was a great revelation of the ideals which were cherished by the great mass of the people of this country. It was a great thing when in any country a great body of citizens recorded their conviction in a great ideal and their determination that it should ultimately prevail. He believed that of this conviction and this determination the ballot had most eloquently spoken.

Mr. WALTER CITRINE said that the ballot was a triumph for collective common sense and a demonstration of a high idealism and faith in humanity which must be exceedingly disconcerting to the opponents of collective security.

Other speakers were LORD HOME, DR. F. W. NORWOOD, Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY, Mrs. PAVITT, and Mr. W. J. WILLIAMS.

The detailed analysis of the final figure of 11,627,765 votes is given below.