

—though I prefer the expression “rule of unanimity” to “right of veto”, which is pejorative—limited to the five Great Powers requires their agreement for the taking and executing of decisions. I do not need to tell you that there have been moments since San Francisco when this agreement did not appear to exist. But there again, my dear colleagues, let us lift up our heads! You have seen how agreement between the Great Powers has been achieved in all our debates during a quarter of a century. It was a consequence of their reciprocal will, I agree; but it was also the result of the external pressure of the medium and small Powers, of that spirit of international collaboration which admittedly gave way before the attacks of imperialism but which never ceased to exist and to inspire our labours. It is that spirit of international co-operation born among us, maintained by us and preserved by us which we must bring to the new institution.

And, as I conclude these observations, I am irresistibly reminded of the very words, so noble and just, with which the President of our Assembly concluded his opening speech. We meet indeed “not to terminate what activities are carried out from this centre, but to transfuse into a new body all our enduring assets—moral and material—the accumulated imponderable experience of twenty-five years, the inestimable treasure of traditions which is needed to preserve for the future of international life that continuity which is a divine privilege of human life and endeavour”<sup>1</sup>.

#### The President :

*Translation:* M. Petitpierre, first delegate of Switzerland, will address the Assembly.

#### M. Petitpierre (Switzerland) :

*Translation:* My country finds itself to-day in a unique position. For most of the nations represented here, this last Assembly of the League of Nations is not an ending but merely the passing from one institution, which has ceased to exist, to a new institution, which is already a living reality. For Switzerland, which has had the honour and privilege of housing the first League of Nations during its relatively brief existence, this last Assembly assumes a doubly negative character: the abandonment of her territory by an international organisation whose mission it was to establish and to maintain in the world a regime of peace and lasting security and the even more pertinent fact that from now onwards—to-day or to-morrow—my country will be in a void, no longer actively associated with the immense effort accomplished since Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco to establish that regime of peace and security on new and sounder bases.

Accepted herself as a Member of the League of Nations as she was, with her international attributes, Switzerland has endeavoured to collaborate with the other nations in the sphere of pacific activities. Her contribution was modest, commensurate with her means, but it was offered in all sincerity, based as it was on a constant desire to assist in the promotion of that very collaboration between various elements whose benefits Switzerland has within her limited territory enjoyed for centuries.

But if this last Assembly arouses melancholy feelings in the hearts of the Swiss, they have compensations.

The League of Nations may disappear. The idea which it embodied subsists. It already lives again in the United Nations organisation, whose framework is much wider, since two great countries absent at the birth of the League have assumed responsibilities towards the new Organisation by

according to it from the outset the support of their power.

There is too often a tendency to regard idealism as incompatible with a sense of reality. We forget that true realism takes account of ideal values. The Charter of San Francisco is inspired by and based on those values, but it has profited by the experience of the League of Nations and, by creating effective security machinery, it has seen to it that they should not be left defenceless.

Switzerland will remain faithful to the ideal proclaimed by the League of Nations, to the ideal embodied to-day in the United Nations Organisation, because that ideal is at the basis of the structure of my country, which without it could not have been founded, could not have survived and—who knows—might perhaps not have been chosen as the first seat of a World Parliament.

Whether a Member of the United Nations Organisation or not, we shall remain true to that ideal, for we believe in the necessity of a truly democratic international institution—that is to say, an organisation within which each people and each State may assume the rôle best suited to its capacities and its particular vocation. Diversity can be a source of strength and not of weakness, when the action of the component elements is inspired by a common purpose.

But fidelity to an ideal is not sufficient; it must be supported by action, which alone can transform that ideal into a reality. Here, again, this last General Assembly is important in so far as it expresses the will to transmit to the United Nations Organisation the technical activities in which the League has been engaged, often very successfully: in the social sphere through the International Labour Organisation, in the sphere of public health through the Health Organisation and in many others referred to just now by M. Paul-Boncour. The instrument of work forged at Geneva, which we are handing over body and mind to the Organisation of to-morrow, will constitute a pledge for the future.

May I be permitted in this connection to express a twofold wish? First, that these technical activities may continue to be carried on without interruption within the framework of the United Nations and, secondly, that those States which, though not Members of the United Nations, have constantly proved their attachment to the international judicial institutions created for the pacific settlement of disputes between States, may be allowed to adhere at the earliest possible moment to the new International Court of Justice.

In conclusion, the creation of the United Nations Organisation is the finest and most lively tribute that could have been paid to the League of Nations, whose disappearance makes one think of the grain of wheat which must die beneath the earth in order to bring forth its manifold fruits. That the United Nations Organisation may one day realise all the hopes that the League was unable itself to fulfil is the ardent wish of my country.

#### The President :

*Translation:* M. F. Beelaerts van Blokland, first delegate of the Netherlands, will address the Assembly.

#### M. Beelaerts van Blokland (Netherlands) :

*Translation:* Twenty-two years ago one of my predecessors in the Netherlands delegation to the League of Nations Assembly, M. van Karnebeek, spoke as follows: “The uncertainty which still hovers over the League does not cause me disquiet. The League will last because it lives. It lives because it was bound to be. It was bound to be because mankind has entered upon an era of inter-relationship, and even States cannot stand aside”. We have met here now for the winding-up of the League of Nations, which seemed once

<sup>1</sup> See page 19.