(September 20, 1933)

Labor's Foreign Policy

By Mr. J. Philip Noel-Baker.

President Sifton:—We are honored today by the presence at the head table of Mr. Sanford Evans, who was the first president of the first Canadian Club in Canada. We also are honored by the presence at the head table of a representative delegation, guests of the Canadian Club, from all the labor organizations in the city with whom we could get in touch. Also, of course, to keep the best until the last, the guest of honor, Mr. J. Philip Noel-Baker. His personality in public affairs is one which has attracted me very much. It has a romantic tinge. In the first place his father was born in the Dominion of Canada so that in the descriptive sense of the word he is one of the home boys that have made good in the big city. He is a Londoner and member of the Labor party. He sat in the House of Commons from 1929. Our Secretary did not indicate the fact that he is one of the Labor members who according to Sir John Power the other day was in the list of those that they succeeded in defeating in 1931, so he was a member from 1929 until 1931. His father before him was one of the first Pacifists, one of the original creators of the body of opinion which commenced to take the view a few years ago that this idea of building big guns and big navies and big armies and a policy of destroying the foreigner and stealing what could be stolen was perhaps not the best that humanity could attain. Of course, in those days these people were very unpopular but they are entitled to respect and consideration, as of course is now accepted throughout the world. Mr. Noel-Baker is a loyal successor of his father's views although holding them from his own intelligence and research and examinations. He has another whole life, of course. He was one of the most brilliant international athletes which England produced. He was the chief 1,500 metre runner for Cambridge and appeared in the Olympic games in 1912 and 1920, and in connection with these two occasions, those of you who follow athletics carefully will remember two very interesting occasions which demonstrated his own capacity to run and his own capacity for self-denial which resulted in success for his team. In 1912 and 1920 both he and one other man survived from the four British nominees at the distance and when it came time to run in the finals one had to be selected as the final banner bearer for the country. Mr. Noel-Baker at his own request, although in the opinion of most people he was the better qualified of the two, asked to run as the second man. Those of you who understand track matters know what that means—the second man runs and tries to clear the way for the first man and tries to see his colleague wins. In both cases the colleague of Mr. Noel-Baker finished first in the contest, so you will see he has a splendid record both intellectually and as an athlete. I take great pleasure in introducing Mr. J. Philip Noel-Baker.

Mr. Noel-Baker:—Mr. Chairman and members of the Canadian Club, I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to you for your kindness in asking me to come here today. I count it a proud privilege to be the guest of the Canadian Club. Your chairman has said my father was Canadian born. In fact I have five generations of Canadian ancestors and a great grandfather who was a loyalist caught by the Americans and hanged to a tree and left for dead. Fortunately his family found him and that is why I am here. And I would like, if I may, to take this occasion (I shall have no other) of expressing on my own behalf my gratitude to all those in Toronto who have done so much to help our Conference at Hart House and to make our stay in your city as happy and profitable as it has been. My only regret, our only regret, is that we have not had more time to enjoy the hospitality that has been so lavishly offered to us. In the last few days I have often thought of a story told me by your fellow citizen, the

Right Hon. Mr. Newton Rowell. He, as you remember, was the leader of the Canadian delegation to the first Assembly of the League of Nations. At that first Assembly things had not settled down. The delegations entertained each other almost as lavishly as you have entertained us here. Banquet followed banquet and as week followed week the strain upon the health of the delegations became very considerable. Mr. Rowell told me one day he was sitting at luncheon beside a delegate from Persia and conversation was very difficult, neither English nor French helping them really to understand each other. And at last in desperation Mr. Rowell said to his neighbor, "I wonder how you manage all these feasts. How does your constitution stand it?" The Persian looked at him blankly for a few moments and then he thought he had heard a key word, "constitution." "Oh," he said, "we have an upper and a lower chamber and we do very well."

Well, sir, we had the task of carrying through the work of a particularly arduous conference and of trying to do justice to the hospitality which Toronto and Canada have given us here. It has been difficult. Some of us have wished that we were as well equipped as the Persians, but we all felt great gratitude which I now desire to express.

I am here today, so I understand, because I am a member of the British Labor Party, and it seems to me a little hard on the Conservative members of this Club that after hearing the extreme radicalism of Sir John Power yesterday—and I always find it difficult to get a subject on which I differ from Sir John Power—you have me here today. I am told by your Secretary to speak of Labor's foreign policy, the policy which a Labor Party will pursue when it comes to office. I will try to do so, but I would like to say, and this is what we all profess, I will speak of the policy which the next Labor Government will pursue, but it will pursue that policy not with hope of party electoral advantage but because it believes that policy is right and because it believes that that policy has the support of the overwhelming mass of the population of our country. I sat for two years and more in the foreign

office when the last Labor Government was in power. We pursued the same kind of Foreign Policy that we shall pursue next time and we are confident that we shall have the warm support of very many people who belong not only to our Party but to other parties in the state as well.

I begin with the question, what is Foreign Policy today? There are two conceptions now in conflict within the ranks of every government, in every foreign government, and in the public opinion of the world. The first starts from the conception that the interests of nations are necessarily and always in conflict. They consider that the advantage of one nation is gained at the expense of its neighbors. In consequence the relations of nations must necessarily be relations of latent hostility and struggle. The diplomacy must be the diplomacy of Machiavelli, the attempt to steal advantage by lies and fraud. Such diplomacy leads in the nature of the case to competitive armaments, each nation trying to be stronger than the rest. Competitive armament leads to competitive alliances, each nation seeking to add strength in order to be stronger than the group which is ranged against it. The whole policy is economic self-sufficiency and ultimately it must lead to that open warfare for which all the rest of it is but the preparation.

The second conception of foreign policy is very different. It starts from the opposite assumption that the interests of nations, like the interests of individuals within the state, are not in conflict but on the contrary are common interests which they share, that the prosperity of one nation is not diminished by the prosperity of another but on the contrary is increased, that the relations of nations therefore should be relations of friendship and cooperation, that diplomacy should have as its purpose to promote the common interests which the nations share, that their armaments should be used not for conquests, not for selfish action, but to maintain peace and order throughout the world and that they should be reduced to a level, the lowest level at which that purpose can be attained. And this view of foreign policy leads to the inevitable conclusion that there must be no alliance among nations but the great

world-alliance against all policy and war, and to the conclusion that that alliance against policy and war should be made effective in the affairs of men by common institutions and a common law.

Now, sir, between the two systems; the system of anarchy on the one hand, and the system as it has been called of collective action for peace upon the other, the two systems between which we have today to choose, the system of the past; the system of tomorrow, I cannot better illustrate the difference between them other than by dipping for a moment into the history of your great neighbor to the south.

In 1778 the people of the United States created a federation. They built it upon the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence, from which I want to read some words: "We, therefore, representatives of the people of the United States of America, do solemnly publish and declare that these colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states..and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, and to do all other things which independent states may of right do."

Full power to levy war in 1778? And in 1928 the leaders of the United States gathered together the peoples of the world in Paris and asked them to sign the Kellogg Pact by which the right of war is renounced forever, by which they undertake that all their international disputes shall never be settled save by a pacific means. The declaration of Independence in the eighteenth century. The declaration of inter-dependence in the twentieth! We, Mr. Chairman, in our generation, have to choose between independence and inter-dependence. In reality, our governments have already made their choice when they signed the Kellogg Pact, when they signed the covenant of the League of Nations, when they set up the Assembly of the League of Nations, its Council, its standing civil service and the Secretariat, its permanent Court of International Justice, the International Labor organization with its conference and governing body, when they set up all these major political institutions, with all the smaller committees

that they have gathered around them, when they agreed to the new world law upon which these institutions are founded and by which they live, they have chosen in favor of the new system of inter-dependence, the new system of collective effort for the maintenance of peace. They have pledged themselves—all our governments have done it—to settle all our international disputes by reference to judicial decisions or arbitrations. They have undertaken by article sixteen of the covenant that if any one of their number should be attacked the others will rally to its defence, and will stand together to protect it from aggression. The world-alliance against armaments and war is an accomplished fact on paper and the governments are bound to this new system. It is not a decision that they can go back on at their will. They are bound in law and honor as solemnly as any government can be bound to anything in the world and if you could expect of the government the same honesty that any business man expects of those with whom he deals day by day, war would long ago be a thing of the past and the co-operative federation of the world would be coming into being and I think there is no man of commen sense in this room or elsewhere, who doubts that in choosing for the second system the government were right. Who can prefer a world of war to a world of co-operation and peace? If there be any such I would ask him to consider only two reasons which seem to me decisive at the present day. The first is economic. Is there any reasonable man who believes that the ideal of national, economic self-sufficiency can be carried through in the modern world except at a price that means disaster for those who seek to do it? Is there any one in this room who believes Canada can live unto itself? If so, why are people so frightened about the fate of the American dollar?

I was passing through Paris just three weeks ago today and I walked across the Place de la Concorde, passed by the Hotel Crionne where fifteen years ago I sat at the feet of President Wilson and Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts when they drafted the Covenant of the League. To my amazement opposite the Hotel I saw a new and magnificant building. It was the government offices of the

United States. If there is any government in the world that might aim at nationalization as they are in the economic plane, it is the government of the United States, and yet for its own purposes, to promote its own interests in the heart of disturbed Europe, the United States has to erect a new and magnificent building to house the services which it believes profitable to maintain. Is that isolation? And if the United States cannot go in for isolation is there any country that can?

What is the depression? The depression from which we are suffering today results from the fact that international trade of the world has fallen from 1929 to 1933 by exactly two-thirds, and if you could restore international trade by restoring that two-thirds of the commerce which has stopped, the depression would be over in the twinkling of an eye. By national restriction mankind is now increasing the severity of the depression and is doing so by refusing the wealth which ought to wipe out poverty from our midst. Sir Arthur Salter in his remarkable book, "Recovery", published a few years ago, said the essential characteristic of the depression was the awful unutilized capacity of the world. Is there any hope Canada will be able to fulfill the mighty destiny which should be hers unless she can sell wheat and minerals and timber and other raw materials to the other great nations of the world? If by some international policy we could raise the standard of living of the peoples of the East, if we could increase the prosperity of China and India and Japan, we should open up before Canada a prospect of wealth and prosperity that not even its most ambitious dreamers have ever thought of.

And why should we not do it? The international trade of Australia is something like one hundred and fifty pounds per family. The international trade of China, a figure given by T. B. Soon to the London Economic Conference the other day is four shillings per head. Double it. Treble it. You make a stupendous market for the goods Canada can sell. Economic self-sufficiency will not do.

My second reason is not less strong. People in this room who lived through the last war do not want to see another. But the last war was child's play compared to

the next. It has been a great part of my official duties for the last ten years to study war, to discuss it with the experts who are preparing the next war if it comes, and I am absolutely convinced from everything that they have told me that the next war will mean destruction on a scale which the soldiers of the last war never imagined. Go to Berlin today. See the government of Berlin preparing gas-proof cellars under every house. See them distribute gas masks to women and children. See them organizing drill for what shall be done when the air attack comes. There is no general staff in any country of the world which is not preparing to start the next war by the bombardment of the great cities of its enemies. And there is no defence. I wrote a book about disarmament in the year, I think 1926. It fell into the hands of an air officer very highly placed. I had given the most lurid description of which my pen was capable of what the attacks would be like, starting with high explosives, carried on by incendary bombs which would start a thousand fires which no fire brigade could possibly control, ending with poison gas which would finish off what remnants of population there might be. And this officer came to me and said, "Why were you so mealy-mouthed? Why didn't you paint the picture as it really will be. It is going to be incomparably worse than that and there is no defence." One of my intimate friends has been for a year or so Minister of Air in one of the great European countries. He told me a week or two ago that before he took that office he had always believed that air attack was more powerful than any means of defence that could be brought against it and he told me that after discussing the matter with his staff for a year or more he was absolutely convinced that the idea of defence against air attack was without foundation of any kind. Surely Lord Grey was right when he said, "We must disarm or perish", and Mr. Baldwin was right when he said, "If we let the next war happen our civilization will fall with as great a shock as that of Rome."

You and I really don't believe these things. We really don't feel as though our civilization was going to collapse. We feel its vitality pulsating around us. We feel the will

to live. But Viscount Grey and Mr. Baldwin were Ministers of the Crown, holding the highest office, advised by those whose task it is to consider the problems of war if war could come, and they give us these warnings. We cannot dismiss them as alarmist figments. They are sombre, grisly, catastrophic truth. And isolation with regard to war is just as hopeless as it is with regard to economic life. Canada might possibly keep out of a few if she cut loose from the collective system. She might be able to keep her hands clear when Bolivia and Paraguay are fighting. She might even stay out of war when Poland and Czecho-Slovakia have a scrap. But little wars lead to big wars. In the end the big smash will come and we shall all be enveloped.

Now, sir, with these facts before us I submit and I believe, without contradiction, that no man in his senses would say that the governments were wrong in making the treaty which set up the collective system for the organization of the world. No one disputes that. But what many people do dispute, what nearly everybody is saying today is that although the system may be right, it is not possible. It is not practical politics. Have the governments not tried to do it? Have they not spent millions of dollars upon the League of Nations? Has the League not disappointed the hopes which were placed in it? Has it not ended in a double failure, over disarmament and the Manchurian dispute? It it any use trying to keep up the collective system, if the peoples of the world are not ready for that system? Had we not better give it up? Go back to the old system of old diplomacy under which, after all we got along. That view is prevalent today. Last November Mr. Baldwin made a remarkable speech in the House of Commons which thrilled the hearts of his fellow countrymen in which he stressed the dangers of the next war, in which he proposed the total abolition of air forces of every kind and in which he said we all had an interest in that abolition. But he ended by saying that he didn't believe the last war had yet been fought.

Yesterday I took shelter from a shower of rain in a motor service station on a corner of one of your big

streets. I had not been two minutes within the station before the man in charge began to talk to me about England. "Things are looking up over there, I expect," he said, "lots of jobs in the Navy yards". "Oh, no, not yet," I said. "Soon will be," he rejoined, "they are getting ready for the next war already." And nothing I could say would persuade him that the next war would not shortly come. That is the psychology that makes war inevitable within a measurable time. And, Mr. Chairman, the Labor Party will never admit that that psychology is right. The Labor Party will never admit that the collective system has failed. They hold and hold with sure reason that until 1931 the collective system had had a very remarkable success. I cannot recount to you the triumphs of the League of Nations but they are worth your careful consideration. In the economic field they stabilised the exchanges of Europe in 1921 and 1922 and 1923.

They restored Austria after her total economic collapse. They settled the refugees in Asia Minor in new homes upon the soil of Greece and no one who saw these refugees, as I did with Dr. Nansen, flying without money, food, clothes from the dreaded enemy, helpless in the Winter in the empty deserts of Eastern Thrace, and could see them today living new lives in new homes, which the League of Nations has created upon their Mother land, can doubt in that alone the League had rendered signal service to mankind. In the social field shall I mention the drug traffic? Have you read the report of Russell Pasha, who is in charge of dealing with drugs in Egypt and whose outwitting of the international dope ring rivals a story of Edgar Wallace? Have you ever asked the medical profession about the achievements of the Health section of the League in public health?

Have you ever considered the disputes which the League has settled? Only the other day they stopped a war between Norway and Denmark, a war about Greenland, a war which would have been a disaster, not only to Scandinavia, but to the world. Norway wanted Greenland as much as Canada ever wanted Labrador or Alaska. The Permanent Courts gave a verdict that Greenland belonged

to Denmark. Norway accepted the verdict. There have been fifty such disputes settled without trouble and disturbance by the Permanent Court and others settled by the Council of the League. And there have been five wars at least and one within the last twelve months which the League has brought to an end. True that in 1931 it failed. It would be a miracle if we had got rid of more without one failure. But why did it fail? Because the governments, which have never tried very hard to make the collective system work, gave up trying altogether. It is not a failure of the League. It is a failure of the governments of which the League is composed.

Here is not the place to debate the two great questions of disarmament and the Manchurian dispute, but I only say, and I ask your forgiveness for being controversial, that I have sat the last eighteen months in Geneva watching all these questions at first hand and I am absolutely convinced that if the government, if our government, had done their best to make the collective system work, Japanese aggression would have been prevented and the disarmament problem would long ago have been solved. The governments did not use the collective system. They took, as I think, a short view. They allowed the new world law against war to be disregarded with impunity and as a result the forces of lawlessness have spread like wildfire throughout the world. They tried to avert a war in the Far East by shirking their duty with the result that the spectre of war looms larger than ever today.

It is all these that the next Labor government will try to change. It will do so with the absolute conviction that the most vital interest of our people and your people are at stake. The world's situation is very grave. John Stewart Mill once said that for great ills small remedies do not produce small results. They produce no results at all and in the situation of the world today we need not small remedies but great ones. We need a bold policy. We need not be afraid of the results we want to achieve. We must be ready to change the world, change it whatever the change may cost. Faced with the realities of air warfare we must steel our minds to the belief that there must be

a new world if there is to be any world at all and I think we must be ready to use our imagination to have a very wide vision of what the new world is going to be like. I remember reading somewhere that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, while a young man, wrote that the Confederation of Canada would be the doom of the French race and the ruin of Lower Canada. He lived to be one of the greatest leaders of the Confederation. Let us accept now that the true task of our generation is to lay the foundation for the federation of the world. We, in the Labor party, are not afraid of a statement like that. We believe it to be practical politics, and, indeed the only practical politics of the day.

Let me sketch to you, in a few moments, the kind of practical measures which we should endeavor to carry through. We should pursue a policy of peace and co-operation with all nations. If there were some nation like Russia, with whom our relations were not what we should wish, we should try to improve them. We should pursue a policy of close collaboration with the United States, believing that with them our power for good in the world would be greatly increased. We should stand for liberty and justice throughout the world. We should make the League of Nations minority protection system come to life. Above all we should concentrate efforts upon Geneva. We should use the whole power of our government, as no one has ever yet used it, to bring the League new authority and new prestige. We should not treat it like a poor relation. We should not spurn its efforts to build up co-operation. On the contrary, the ministers of the government would give a great deal of their time to League of Nations' problems which our government department would cooperate in, and when it came to the budget of the League we should not endeavor as others have done simply to think of cutting it down. Why, the cost of one Dreadnaught, Lord Cecil said the other day, invested at five per cent. would pay the cost of the League of Nations forever! Everybody knows that this depression can only be ended by international co-operation and if that is true who would grudge a million dollars to the

League of Nations for the task of endeavoring to find a solution to the depression by which we lose not a million dollars, but thousands of millions of dollars every year.

Above all, we should make a tremendous drive to end war. By leadership, by example, by constructive proposals, we should eneavor to put vitality into the collective system which now exists, because we in the Labor movement will never admit that these principles against war which we have signed shall become a scrap of paper. We believe that war can be abolished by our present generation and that that can be done if the British peoples will lend their powers to that end. We will fight with all the strength of our movement and with every means at our disposal against another war whenever it shall come. Even in the darkest hour of depression we shall hope on until hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates and with that in view, we shall pass through our parliament—Mr. Henderson spoke of it the other day—a Peace Act which shall lay it down that Great Britain shall never go to war in violation of the National obligation which she has assumed, that Great Britain shall always settle her international disputes by arbitration or judicial decision, that Great Britain shall be empowered by Parliament in advance to take the measures that are required for collective action to restrain aggression, if aggression should recur. We shall seek to complete the League of Nations by bringing in Russia and the United States in whatever form they may come and other peoples who now stand aside. We shall exercise our rights under the covenant to secure international consideration of any situation that is dangerous. We shall make disarmament come by putting forward proposals for reduction down to the level which we imposed fifteen years ago upon Germany and which we have never yet accepted for ourselves. We shall abolish the profit element on materials of war in accordance with the demand of 8,500,000 ex-service men, who sent their delegates to the disarmament conference a few months ago.

There is our program. Peace, international co-operation, disarmament, arbitration. A great American ambassador said, "A pessimist was a man who of two evils

chose both." That is what we have been doing. Armament competition is a danger. So is the League of Nations that is a sham. Let us end the sham. There is a policy upon which not only we but every people in the British Commonwealth of Nations can play its part and if they would stand together I am convinced, as one who has seen the British nations act in co-operation in Geneva, that we can impress our will upon the world, for the power of leadership in the British Commonwealth is something which no one who has not seen it can imagine or believe.

A few months ago there was a play in a theatre in London called "The Miracle of Verdun." The story was that those who died in the last war rose from their graves and came to the rulers of the world in conference assembled to ask for the fulfillment of the pledges made to them during the war. If the army of the dead were to rise and march in column of fours down the street outside, how long do you think they would take to go past this building? For the dead of Britain, five days and nights the column would march without ceasing for a moment. For France seven days and nights; for Germany ten, for Russia, fourteen, for altogether, more than a month the tragic army of the dead would file past.

When I saw that play I thought of that other army of the living, the eight million ex-service men who survive the war and sent their leaders to Geneva to ask that the pledges should be fulfilled. What is it they are asking, what priceless boon? They ask for the end of war and hatred, end of bitterness and strife. They ask for peace, that in peace they may by their humble labor make for their children a world less bitter than the world they have known. I would like to say to them and all who long for peace, "Do not let your courage fail. The day is coming when your rulers will no longer say no."

PRESIDENT SIFTON:—I am going to ask a gentleman very close to the hearts of all the graduates of the University of Toronto to express in his own language our appreciation for the beautiful and practical speech and message of hope of our guest. Mr. Alfred De Lury.

DEAN DE LURY:—Mr. President, Members of the

Club. Your president, in denying you the pleasure of hearing the felicitous words of appreciation that he ordinarily addresses to the guest speaker of the Club, has denied you this pleasure in asking me to say a few words of thanks on your behalf and mine to Mr. Noel-Baker for the address to which we have listened with such great interest and with the most intense pleasure. Mr. Noel-Baker, on behalf of the Club it is not necessary to say that we have followed intensely every word you have said. You have informed us of the policy of the party of which you are so distinguished a member and of whose policy you are such a lucid and charming exponent. We have learned much from this, but I think most of all have we been impressed by the fine idealism which warmed every word that has fallen from your lips. In the old historic party there is a tendency for the idealism upon which they originally rested to recede. The affairs of the party become too strong, yet from time to time we have to work back to those earlier councils of the spirit. We must list back to them because we feel today that only by faith in that idealism can the world be won back to better ways. You spoke of the speakers that have preceded. you. You know, sir, the policy from the first of the Club was to hear the points of view that could be revealed to them by representatives of all parties and all lands. We come to be informed but perhaps, most of all to be stimulated and inspired. I am sure that seldom have we received a greater impulse to finer thinking about our own individual as well as national responsibility than we have today. On behalf of the Club I would express to you these limp words of thanks.