

Church leaders in Geneva ask total disarmament

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Company Limited, recalled the history of the company from the days when Mr. Edward Le Bas, who came from the Channel Islands, established himself as an agent for British and imported steel products in a small office in Leadenhall Street in 1890. It was in 1904 that Georg Fischer Ltd. of Schaffhausen offered Mr. Le Bas the agency for this country. In spite of initial difficulties, the business expanded, and in 1925 it became necessary to create a separate company, the LE BAS TUBE COMPANY LIMITED. The GF Fittings Works at Bedford was established in 1933. Expansion is still going on, and a multi-storey building is being planned on the remaining one-third of the Eagle Wharf Road site to accommodate the Head Office staff and further warehouse space.

It is difficult to say what impressed me most during my visit. In the office building I was struck by the pleasing use of colour and material — even on that far from sunny day they appeared gay and friendly — and by the streamlined “paperwork”. In the warehouses I was fascinated by the smooth and efficient operating procedure of the large cranes, the reach trucks, the specially designed pallets and racks, and, throughout the entire premises, by the careful attention to detail which was so evident wherever I looked — from the automatic disinfectors in the lavatories to the hygienic rubbish bins, from the corrosion-preventing controlled heating to the self-tipping scrap container, from the “piano-key” ringing and flashing telephones to the way very thin tubes are protected against damage in transit by taping them to wooden laths, from the elaborate sprinkler system to the method used for measuring long, heavy pipes — and here we are back again to the pipes, fittings, valves and other GF products advertised by the LE BAS TUBE COMPANY LIMITED. An advert come to life — now we know.

Mariann.

CHURCH LEADERS IN GENEVA ASK TOTAL DISARMAMENT

The development of international peace-keeping machinery so that existing national defence systems may be gradually abolished is “urgent”, top church leaders from countries representing both the East and West positions in current Geneva disarmament negotiations said here.

A consultation on disarmament sponsored by the Commission of the Churches of International Affairs of the World Council of Churches said such machinery could be set up under United Nations auspices or by direct agreement between the nations concerned.

It said its functions would be to provide “on a permanent basis for enquiry, conciliation, mediation, and an international peace-keeping ‘presence’ whether political or military”.

The statement was made public recently following its presentation to the Commission’s Executive Committee.

It welcomed “cautiously but hopefully” agreements between the nuclear powers in the last twelve months. It said there appeared to be two areas in which parties to the Geneva Disarmament Conference were agreed (1) that the reduction of armament must not disturb the balance on which security today is believed to rest; and (2) the ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament.

It is said that as the goal must be arrived at in stages, interim steps must be taken, and emphasized that every

advance in disarmament helps improve the political atmosphere while in turn the easing of political differences facilitates advancements in disarmament.

“It is hard for mutual trust, essential to the achievement of disarmament to grow when the great powers are divided as they are over major political problems, for instance, the future of Germany and of south east Asia,” it said.

Another obstacle, it said, is that local conflicts may lead to local arms races which could involve the large powers.

To prevent this, it said, “international and national efforts must continue until nations and men now subject to domination or discrimination are indeed independent and free.”

The consultation suggested that progress towards disarmament could be achieved by either international means which might concern the balance reduction of nuclear armaments and means of delivery, or by unilateral action “intended to attract a response from the other side”. It added.

“Negotiations can further be assisted by common action which does not directly concern the production or possession of arms, but concerns their deployment or the safeguarding against surprise attack or miscalculation.

“Various defence measures and disarmament proposals have roused great suspicion in opposing camps. These suspicions are in our view accentuated by a failure to listen to each other and sometimes also by misunderstanding of technical aspects. Nevertheless the anxieties themselves are factors which should not be ignored.”

It said that the “distinctive role of the churches in the field has by no means been fully found and exploited”. It called upon the churches in every country to help stimulate imaginative approaches, mould an intelligent and constructive public opinion, strengthen their own fellowship across all frontiers, and support closer contacts in a wider area of scientific, economic, and cultural concerns between people of different political views.

The Churches must warn their governments against “the dangers of self-righteousness and the presumption of power” as “we are all involved in the same fate. We could all be victims of a careless or false step leading to destruction”.

The consultation was addressed by top disarmament negotiators of the USA, the USSR, and Great Britain: Mr. William C. Foster, director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and US Ambassador Clare Berlake; Ambassador Sir Paul Mason of the UK; and Ambassador Mendelleyevich, deputy chairman of the USSR delegation to the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

Another speaker, Ambassador L.C.N. Obi of Nigeria, presented the views of a non-aligned power.

Participants, all of whom were present in their personal capacity, include: Sir Kenneth Grubb, London; Professor Josef Hromadka, Prague; Metropolitan Justin, Bucharest; Metropolitan Nikodim, Moscow; Dr. O. F. Nolde, New York; Bishop D. G. Noth, Dresden, DDR; Dr. C. L. Patijn, Utrecht; Dr. Adrian Pelt, Geneva; Dr. Elfan Rees, Geneva; Dr. Herman Reisig, New York; Professor Ulrich Scheuner, Bonn, Germany; and Dr. W. A. Visser ’t Hooft, Geneva. Countries represented included the following: USA, USSR, UK, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, Rumania, Switzerland and several African nations.

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