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The Promotion of Peace

THE agreement arrived at by the four-power conference which met at Munich on September 30 to find a peaceful solution of the conflicting rights of Czechs and Germans to territory assigned to Czechoslovakia by peace treaties which followed the Great War, marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the world, and will be gratefully welcomed by scientific workers in natural and national fields as a significant stage in the progressive ethical evolution of the human race.

The British people have expressed their enthusiastic admiration for the self-sacrifice and unceasing endeavour exercised by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, to secure this end. Suggestions have been made that a national tribute fund should be opened, and Sir Charles Hyde has put at the disposal of the University of Birmingham the sum of £10,000 to provide a Neville Chamberlain fund or scholarship. Appropriate recognition, independent of nationality, could be given by the Nobel peace prize, which is awarded "to the person who shall have most or best promoted the fraternity of nations and the abolition or dissemination of standing armies and increase of peace congresses".

The immediate object of the meeting between Mr. Chamberlain, M. Daladier, Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, reinforced by letters from President Roosevelt, was to find a peaceable settlement of a bitter dispute between Czechs and Germans; and though the people of Czechoslovakia naturally regard the terms imposed upon them as harsh, they and other nations would suffer far more if active hostilities had eventually to determine them. Even more important than the agreement of the four great European powers as

to new boundaries between Germany and Czechoslovakia was the declaration signed by Mr. Chamberlain and Herr Hitler as the result of a further talk.

"We regard," it says, "the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again. We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe."

This is, indeed, a step forward in the promotion of peaceful methods of settling disputes between nations; and however much we may deplore the intolerance of intellectual freedom, and the persecution of a defenceless minority, by which Germany is suppressing the advancement of knowledge and the rights of man, the declaration of the new Anglo-German undertaking makes the outlook much brighter. Sixty years ago, another Prime Minister, Disraeli, avoided a war between Russia and Britain by the Treaty of Berlin, as the result of consultation with the councils of Europe, and secured his "peace with honour". We hope and believe that the resolution now made between the German Führer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister will have more lasting influence than that reached by Disraeli, of whose treaty it was said soon afterwards :

"Once 'peace with honour' home was brought ;
And there the glory ceases.
For peace a dozen wars has fought,
And honour's all to pieces."