

one to the other. There is a part of the general war effort of the United Kingdom and the dominions which concerns Europe, a part that concerns Asia, Africa and other continents. The Prime Minister cannot possibly be expected to keep himself posted day by day upon significant features of the war unless there is in his office someone specially charged with the duty of assembling material bearing upon the war and perusing as well as keeping records that are issued from time to time by different governments and from other sources. Since the war started recorded proceedings have been published by different countries setting forth their interpretation of various positions, state documents and the like, all of which material is being collected and in different ways utilized under the responsibility of Mr. Brockington. From time to time, as I have occasion to speak upon these matters, or to consult with my colleagues individually respecting them, or to discuss them in the cabinet, Mr. Brockington brings to my attention essential features which in his opinion the Prime Minister should have a knowledge of. That is the nature of the work which it was intended that he should perform in relation to the chronicling of the war effort.

It was not the purpose that Mr. Brockington should be an historian. I believe it will be found at the close of the war that there will have been assembled in the Prime Minister's office a complete set of documents having an immediate bearing upon the situation as it has developed from day to day and as it is developing from month to month and may develop from year to year. Had there not been someone specially charged with that duty we might find ourselves at the close of this war without any of these official records, so necessary in the present, and so essential for reference in the future.

I have occasion almost every day to make perfectly sure of some fact upon which I am expected to express an opinion publicly, or to take up for consideration with my colleagues, and I cannot possibly go and search my own files to discover relevant documents. I must necessarily appeal to someone who is watching the progress of events from day to day. Mr. Brockington's duties lie, in part, in that field, but that is only a part of his duties.

As my hon. friend must know, in a time of war when events are such as they are to-day, all sorts of unforeseen communications come into the Prime Minister's office which must be dealt with in a more or less exceptional and very careful manner. It would take me too long to enumerate them, but I might point out, by way of illustration, events such as occurred when Holland was invaded, Belgium surrendered and France collapsed. Public

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

reference had to be made almost instantly to the significance of these events. Communications had to be sent by the Prime Minister to representatives of those countries here and abroad. I must take time to outline what I believe ought to be said in these and other circumstances requiring some expression of sympathy of views, to indicate to my staff the tenor of communications that should be drafted in the circumstances. But I have not the time from day to day to sit down and personally draft these particular communications.

From day to day we receive from various sources generous gifts of money, other gifts of one kind or another, from different organizations. The country will expect that where people are voluntarily making contributions to our war effort contributions of the kind should be acknowledged with something more than a mere line from a private secretary or some member of a departmental staff. They should if possible receive a letter from the Prime Minister himself. Mr. Brockington has an exceptional gift in his facility of expression, and I had felt, at the time I asked him whether he would assist me in the other matters to which I have referred, that he might help in the drafting of communications of this kind. Again, in the preparation of statements for this house, and statements to be given to the public over the radio and elsewhere, he has given me very real assistance. Let me say, however, that so far as any speeches that I have made are concerned, any public pronouncements or radio broadcasts that I have given, they have been my own. I have been assisted in the work; but I would ask any hon. gentlemen here who have had experience in matters of this kind, whether they ever found it possible to have someone else write a broadcast for them. Especially would I ask this of one who happens to be in a position of responsibility such as I hold at the present time.

While I am on this subject I might say a word which may help hon. members to understand the position in the Prime Minister's office as contrasted with other departments of government. When ministers of the crown take over different departments they go to departments that are fully organized, with deputy ministers, secretaries of the department, clerks, staffs, and every arrangement made which it is possible to make in order to facilitate the work of those departments. On the other hand, when the Prime Minister goes into his office he walks into an empty office except for one or two secretaries who may have come in with him; and from time to time, as the situation changes, there