

causing them a great deal of worry, but the fact is that the government ought not alone to decide the most important matters of public policy. We spend weeks going into great detail on matters which have been determined already, such as the trade treaty between Canada and the United States; surely we can devote one day to a discussion of foreign affairs. I would remind the house that we are not without responsibilities in this regard. As a member of the League of Nations we are committed already to the league and apparently to a program of sanctions. In view of the situation that has developed, I think it is only reasonable that we should know what is the attitude of Canada at this time of crisis.

This is not a secret which must be rigidly maintained within the confines of the cabinet itself. Occasionally I see dispatches from England stating that the British House of Commons has discussed freely certain government policies with regard to foreign affairs. I think that is only right. If war or disaster of any kind comes upon this country, the people will be forced into service. They have the right to know beforehand what are the policies of this government and what we are heading for.

I think most citizens of Canada, in fact most citizens of the leading countries of the world, have been greatly perturbed over the failure of the League of Nations in this Italo-Ethiopian affair. The league has been regarded as the bulwark of peace, and we have been told that we ought to rely upon collective security, but it would seem that the league as it is now constituted has failed dismally. It failed in the Sino-Japanese affair a few years ago; it failed in connection with the South American trouble, and it has failed in the most spectacular way in connection with Ethiopia. What are we going to do with regard to the situation? Are we to continue as members of a league that apparently will afford us no security against war in the future?

We know that this kind of failure is producing armaments on all sides. We know that England has abandoned her old idea of having comparatively small armaments and has begun to speed up the manufacture of armaments. This raises another question. What is our attitude towards Great Britain? Are we going to permit Great Britain to speak for us in the councils of the world? Are we to have no independent voice? Are we simply to acquiesce after the event and be expected to contribute our Canadian boys to forces that may be called up because of the possible bungling of British statesmen or because a political party that happens to be

in power to-day is pursuing a policy not in the interests of world peace? These are important questions for our Canadian people, too important to be passed over lightly.

I did not come prepared for this discussion to-day, and I think we should all be fully prepared when we consider this situation. I do not intend to ask the government to-day for a definite answer or to precipitate a general debate, but I cannot pass up the opportunity afforded by the motion to go into supply without stating my strong conviction that in the very near future the government should take this house into its confidence and tell us very clearly what the obligations of Canada now are with regard to sanctions; what the attitude of this country is going to be towards the League of Nations in the future, having regard to the failure of the league as now constituted to give us any security; and further than that, and I think even more important, what our attitude is going to be with regard to Great Britain herself in the new program of armaments which she has undertaken. Last of all, as we think of the preservation of our own country in the future, we should know where our own reliance is to be placed.

Some of us have tried from time to time when the estimates of the Department of National Defence have been under consideration to draw from the cabinet information of some sort as to what the general defence policy of the country is, whether we alone are to stand against all comers, whether we are to depend upon the United States or whether we are to revert to the older imperial policy and try to come under the wing of Great Britain, with all the advantages and all the disadvantages of that course, or whether some other course is possible. We ought to know these things, and to-day I would, if I might, give notice to the government that some of us at least will expect to discuss this matter in greater detail in the near future. I would ask, therefore, that the government give us some opportunity in the near future—and I should prefer it according to regular procedure—to discuss this whole matter. The question is urgent. I do not think anything is to be gained by a pussyfooting policy.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): First of all may I draw my hon. friend's attention to the fact that I have in no way changed my position as to when a discussion should take place on any particular matter. I have always said that the government would seek to meet what it believed to be the convenience and the wishes of the house. I have before me the reply I gave my hon. friend the other day. On May 7 I said: