

75. *Le Premier ministre au Premier ministre par intérim*

TELEGRAM X. 155

Paris, March 14, 1919

SECRET. YOUR P.231.¹ Fear quite impracticable to put forward claim in matter suggested. France and Belgium very aggressive in seeking to maintain excessive claims for reparation which would absorb more than Germany could pay. Italy even claims indemnity for increased cost of living. We have discussed question several times in meetings of British Delegations. Lloyd George endeavouring to arrange basis of distribution between France, Great Britain and Belgium on basis that each payment divided in proportion fifty to France, thirty-three to British Empire and seventeen to Belgium without regard to nature or amount of claims put forward by each country. Unless some such arrangement can be effected British Empire will get nothing. Clemenceau has agreed tentatively to distribution on basis fifty-eight to France, twenty-five to Great Britain and seventeen to Belgium which Lloyd George refuses to accept. Any amount received by British Empire would be divided on equitable basis between Great Britain and Dominions including India. If we put forward Halifax claims as suggested it would strengthen French demand that their extraordinary reparation claims shall have complete precedence.

BORDEN

76. *Le Premier ministre au président des États-Unis*

Dear Mr. President,

Paris, March 14, 1919

During the early part of this week I have been enabled to give pretty careful consideration to the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and as a result I have circulated to the members of the British Delegations a memorandum embodying certain suggestions on behalf of my colleagues and myself. It seems to me desirable that I should send to you the enclosed copy of the memorandum.² You will understand, I am sure, that it is my desire to be helpful and not critical. I fully realize the immense difficulties which have been overcome in presenting to the world this supremely important document upon which the future of humanity so greatly depends. I appreciate also the danger of undertaking amendments which may renew differences which the committee found it difficult to compose.

May I venture to add a word of earnest and intense appreciation with respect to the great part which you have taken in the accomplishment of this momentous task.

Faithfully yours,

R. L. BORDEN

¹ Document n° 71.² Document n° 74.