

of October 8, 1922, and which appeared in most of our daily papers? This report of his speech at Dumfries on the evening of October 7th, 1922, reads as follows:

"There is every reason to believe," said Mr. Asquith, "that a week ago to-day this country, single-handed, was on the brink of an unnecessary war."

Then referring to the manifesto he said:

"All this strident rhetoric, this flag-waving and bugle-blowing, were wholly inexplicable unless the prospect of war, at any rate, was well in sight."

Mr. Asquith said he could not remember a more ill-timed and discreditable incident in the whole of his public life. The effect was what might have been expected: The French and Italians, who were holding the neutral lines with the British, were withdrawn.

"In our great dominions," said Mr. Asquith, "were statesmen sagacious enough—let us be thankful for it—before they committed their countries to war, who required more information as to what they would be fighting for and as to how and why it had become necessary to fight at all."

May I remind the house that at the time that statement was made, Australia and New Zealand had each signified their intention of sending forces to join with the British forces in the event of war, and that Canada stood out alone in seeking information and asking that her parliament be advised before the people of this country were committed to participation in another war. I quote further from the report as follows:

Referring to the question of the freedom of the straits, Mr. Asquith said the Black sea powers, particularly Russia, had just as much concern therein as Great Britain had. Moreover, the Kemalists themselves declared they were quite willing to accept the principle of the freedom of the straits. He said he saw no reason why they should not mean what they say. "What an issue that would have been to let loose the hazard of the horrors of war," Mr. Asquith exclaimed.

"Let no one be simple minded enough," said Mr. Asquith, "to suppose that the hostilities would have been confined to Chanak. Such a war would probably have involved the greater part of the Asiatic continent nearest Mesopotamia and Palestine, and possibly Egypt and other countries, with the possibility of an infinite repercussion throughout the Moslem world."

Then may I give to my hon. friends opposite the opinion of one who I think was well informed at the time, but who no one for a moment will say is an advocate of the present administration, much less of myself. I refer to Lieut.-Colonel John Bayne Maclean, of MacLean's Magazine. What did that paper have to say with reference to this matter? Colonel Maclean, the editor, under his own name, in the issue of MacLean's

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Magazine of November 15, 1922, published an article headed:

"Did Canada Stop Near East War? Refusal to Take Precipitous Action Saving Factor Sane Thinking Essential to Peace".

The second paragraph of this article reads:

We were recently asked by cable to answer at once by cable that we were ready to embark on another and greater war.

Some men, not Canadians, who have unusually good sources of world-wide information, whose judgment is generally sound and whose views are held in high esteem, are positive that had our Premier succumbed to the Lloyd George-Churchill demands, preceded as they were by propaganda and scheming for Canadian participation, the British Empire would undoubtedly have been at war now with Turkey, Russia and perhaps India, Afghanistan, Persia, and God knows who else or what the end would have been.

That was the opinion at that time of Colonel Maclean, and he had sources of information which I do not hesitate to say from what I have since learned were pretty reliable. The view which he there expressed I have been told in Great Britain on very high authority was not very far from the mark as to what might have followed had Canada not taken the position which she then did.

I wish to say to my hon. friend that if this incident proved anything, it proves above all else that the spirit and the purpose and the attitude of an administration on this great question of peace and international understanding is more important than any of the lesser matters of departmental administration or departmental propaganda. The Chanak incident is only one of a number of incidents which have come up in the course of recent years, and all of which have served to disclose the essential importance of the attitude of an administration.

Take the treaty of Lausanne a year or two later. This government was confronted with a request to ratify the treaty of Lausanne. If we had accepted the view that our opponents took at the time we would have signed a treaty in the negotiation of which we were not represented, which had not been signed by any representatives of Canada authorized by this government or parliament, and we would have now been committed to the obligations growing out of that treaty. We took the position that not having been asked to participate in the negotiation of that treaty and not having been represented, neither should we be asked to sign the treaty nor this parliament be asked to approve of it, which would be essential for its ratification.

Let me go a step further. This administration in 1926 having these matters in mind,

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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