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engaged himself upon a policy of threats and ultimatums. . . I go further, and I say that, if we had made an ultimatum in the days immediately before the Nuremberg speech Europe would to-day have been plunged into a world war.

In the light of this analysis, the house will be able to understand clearly the position confronting the Canadian government during the crisis, and the considerations which necessarily governed anything we might say or do. Hon. members will please note the full significance of Mr. Chamberlain's words:

Indeed, this country, which does not readily resort to war, would not have followed us if we had tried to lead it into war to prevent a minority from obtaining autonomy, or even from choosing to pass under some other government.

Also the words of Sir Samuel Hoare:

If we had made an ultimatum before the Nuremberg speech, Europe would to-day have been plunged into a world war.

We considered the position carefully and continuously. It was clear to us from the course of events—and I think it would have been clear to anyone who was accustomed to observe international relations and who took pains to read and analyse carefully the public statements and events at the time—that the British government regarded themselves as acting in the capacity of a mediator, and were anxious to avoid any course of action, or statement which might prejudice the success of these efforts.

We were thousands of miles away from the scene of action; we knew that the situation was changing daily and even hourly. We received a great deal of confidential information from the British government, but it will be realized that such communications could not, in fact, keep up with the hourly changes in the actual situation.

In such circumstances what, I ask, was the proper attitude of the Canadian government toward the question of making public declarations? It must be abundantly apparent that in such a situation when the British government on the spot were taking the lead in a purely mediatory capacity, the last thing we could properly do was to make any public declaration having the character or giving the impression of a belligerent statement. Any such statement taken in conjunction with other possible developments of which we could know nothing at the time, might have had the effect of causing fatal suspicions by persuading one side of the dispute under mediation that, in spite of what the responsible mediator himself was saying as to his position, the real intentions were something

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

different. In this connection it is well to recall that if these delicate negotiations had broken down, if the mediation had failed, the brunt of the disaster, and of the unimaginable sufferings, would have fallen, not upon our people and cities, but upon the peoples and the cities of those countries on the spot whose governments were responsible for the conduct of the negotiations, and were trying so hard to find the way out.

Some of those who were calling upon the Canadian government in September to throw its military weight into the scale, laid great emphasis upon the example other dominions were giving. Even yet, scarcely a day passes without some emphatic assertion that the other dominion governments had expressed to their own people and to the United Kingdom their readiness to back the British government in war for Czechoslovakia, and that Canada alone lagged behind. What are the facts? The question raises issues of such permanent importance, the flagrant misrepresentations that have occurred in the past may so easily occur again, that I think it well worth our while to examine the actual position taken by the governments in question.

In South Africa parliament was in session, though it adjourned on September 24. The session was marked by a good deal of debate on the general question of South Africa's position in war. The Minister of Justice, General Smuts, declared towards the end of August, that in 1914 parliament had decided to what extent South Africa would participate in the war, but the fact that they went to war then happened automatically, in accordance with their status at that time. To-day, the government's policy was that South Africa would not be forced into war automatically in any way, but would participate in any war only when its parliament took that decision in the interests of South Africa. He added that it was his personal opinion that if Great Britain should be herself attacked and involved in actual danger—not when she became involved in war in central Europe as an ally of France—South Africa would come to her aid, rather than withdraw from the friendly bonds which united them to that country on which their own safety at sea depended. The Prime Minister, General Hertzog, thereupon stated that the Minister of Justice was entitled to say so, but the government did not anticipate things, and it was not their duty to prepare hypothetical cases and to answer them. When the time came, the people would decide, and it would all depend on who had the most authority and whom the people trusted most.

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The Minister of Defence, Mr. Pirow, later said the views that South Africa would never under any circumstances fight side by side with Great Britain, or that when Britain was at war they were automatically compelled to participate, were both fallacious.

On the specific Czechoslovak issue, General Hertzog on September 6 said the South African government had not consulted or negotiated with the British government to determine what policy Great Britain should pursue over the Czechoslovak dispute, and had not become obliged to support Great Britain if she became involved in war as a result of her policy. On September 24, he repeated that Parliament would decide the country's course when the need arose, and that it would be mischievous to make any premature statement of policy. He emphasized that General Smuts' assurances that South Africa would stand by Britain were specifically intended to apply to an aggressive attack on herself by which she was endangered, and declared that he himself would agree with that, "if only because South Africa was a member of the league". He would see to it that when it became necessary South Africa's obligations towards the league would be carried out.

An article in the *Round Table*, summed up the situation, at the close of the South African parliamentary session, as follows:

It seemed clear that, despite past differences of opinion, the government would be united in the view that South Africa would not automatically be at war if Great Britain went to war, that no decision would be taken without first summoning parliament, and that in the meantime South Africa would be regarded as neutral.

On behalf of the Irish government, Mr. De Valera strongly supported the efforts for peace. On September 27, he telegraphed Mr. Chamberlain as follows:

Let nothing daunt or defeat you in your effort to secure peace. The tens of millions of innocent people on both sides who have no cause against each other but who are in danger of being hurled against each other, with no alternative to mutual slaughter, are praying that your efforts may find a way of saving them from this terrible doom.

There was at that time no governmental statement or discussion of Irish policy in the event of war breaking out.

New Zealand at the time was on the eve of a general election. The traditional attitude of New Zealand in following British policy is well known. It is equally well known that of recent years the New Zealand government has differed from and vigorously

criticized the policy of the government of the United Kingdom as to collective security. The *Round Table* referred to the New Zealand attitude in the following words:

During the crisis expression of opinion was almost entirely lacking. Leader writers treated the Czech situation in a curiously detached way. They did not discuss whether or not the commonwealth should in this instance propose collective action on behalf of the Czechs.

Apparently there was little discussion of the situation by party leaders. Mr. Savage is quoted as making a statement on September 15, "Wherever Britain is, we must be." A fortnight later the government sent a message to the British government earnestly supporting Mr. Chamberlain's "continued and determined efforts for the peace of Europe and the world, which it sincerely trusts will be crowned with success."

It remains to consider Australia. In September, the commonwealth parliament was in session. Mr. Brennan, a former labour minister, reviewing the government's attitude early in October, asked:

What was the policy of the government during this trying time? Its foreign policy, if it had one, and I doubt it, was never expressed. Other dominions and Great Britain herself as a sister dominion, freely expressed their views through their leaders. The public men of all countries expressed their opinion, except here in Australia. The Australian government, in what it conceived to be a grave crisis, had nothing to say but hush, hush.

Apparently, the world over, opponents of governments are not unlike in their criticisms.

Speaking in parliament on September 28, the Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, declared that what the government of Great Britain had been doing, with the support of the government of Australia, had been to make every effort to preserve the world's peace. Every British nation had done its best to keep the peace. It was still hoped that peace might be preserved.

A week later, a lengthy debate on the situation took place in the house of representatives. As regards general policy, different points of view were expressed. The leader of the opposition, Mr. Curtin, declared:

The Labour party in Australia is opposed in principle and in practice to Australians being recruited as soldiers in the battlefields of Europe. . . . We believe that the best service which Australia can render to the British Empire is to attend to its own business, to make certain that we manage Australia effectively, so that we shall have the necessary population and be able to rely upon ourselves in the event of an emergency.