

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.

Speaking for the government, Mr. Menzies emphasized the desirability of a common foreign policy, and the difficulty of an isolation policy.

My doctrine is that so long as the British empire is constituted as it is to-day, it is not possible for Australia to be neutral in a British war. Some people disagree with that view, yet it is my conviction and I express it without hesitation. But the extent to which Australia may participate in a war, the means by which she may participate, and the question whether Australian soldiers shall fight on Australian territory or on foreign soil, are matters for determination by Australia, or may I say, by the enemy. Sometimes the enemy may settle the argument for us without much ado. If he does not do so, this country, in the exercise of its undoubted powers of self-government, will be able to determine the extent of its own participation in these and such other ancillary matters as I have referred to.

On the specific question raised by the opposition, as to whether the government had committed Australia to war in the event of