

were hectic days. Then there was Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Berchtesgaden on September 15, as the Prime Minister mentioned, his visit to Godesberg on September 22, and then the final visit to and settlement at Munich on September 29, a settlement which was without doubt distasteful to all lovers of freedom but one which undoubtedly prevented a world war at that time. It implemented the principles behind the Kellogg-Briand pact of settling, by peaceful means rather than by war, international differences. It was the principle of settlement of international differences by conference round the council table rather than on the battlefield, and frankly I believe that the vast majority of the people not only of Great Britain but of all the British dominions supported Mr. Chamberlain in the action he took at that time.

I was much impressed by a statement of Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, who said that if the peace that was brought about by the Munich settlement had only a five per cent chance of being maintained, he would support it, and that I believe was the feeling of most people. The horrors of war, the danger of a world-wide conflagration, a catastrophe much greater than that which took place between 1914 and 1918—all these considerations made the whole world to a certain extent at any rate satisfied with what Mr. Chamberlain, M. Daladier, and even Mussolini, to do him justice, did to assure peace for the time being even at the expense of poor little Czechoslovakia.

But the recent attack on Czechoslovakia in mid-March, the rape of Czechoslovakia as it has been described by many, was so illegal, so brutal and so barbarous that all decent, liberty-loving people condemned it as an international crime, indeed as international gangsterism.

Those are the two crises which we have to discuss. I want to point out now—and I say this in no spirit of criticism; I just mention it as a fact—that I have to view these crises from the point of view of the man in the street. I was not called into consultation by the government. I was dependent, as all members of the house were except the ministers of the crown upon the press and the radio. I am not complaining. I simply point out that in Great Britain they took a different course. In both crises they did call into consultation, according to press reports, the leaders of all parties, and some who were not leaders of parties. I think that was the proper course, and without attempting to criticize I must say that I think it was the wise course. But the government here did not consider it

[Mr. Manion.]

necessary to do this. I do think, however, that such a crisis as that of September or of March was a time for joint action, for cooperation, for a united country, for a truce in party warfare. But I repeat—and I am not attempting to find fault—the government did not choose to act in this way. I do nothing more than mention the attitude of the government as it affected myself as leader of the National Conservative party.

The crises have passed for the time being, and we may speak freely, without descending to party politics. I shall endeavour to keep as far away as possible from any political criticism because this is a question far above politics, and I shall try to take a position above anything in the way of partisanship.

I realize that the government's position, in such critical times as September and March, is both difficult and serious. Canada is not like Australia or New Zealand, not only because we have not the same geography, but because of racial considerations and sectional reasons. Canada can be more justly compared, I think, with South Africa. Our two countries have two races, two mentalities, many different sections. I had no desire in such critical times and in such a critical matter, in any way to embarrass the government, and therefore in September I followed the English example. I felt it to be the patriotic course to offer nothing in the way of criticism. For I entirely agree, and I have said this many times, that it is the first duty of public men in this country to hold Canada together. I admit that this is not very easy under present conditions, and yet I submit to those unthinking people who too freely take a different attitude, who too freely ignore the duty of a public man, that it would be no advantage to the empire for Great Britain, we will say, to win a war in Europe or Asia if it were at the cost of smashing the Dominion of Canada into its original pieces. Quite frankly, I believe that too many have forgotten that duty which devolves upon public men.

Now, sir, during the September crisis I made no statements until after the Prime Minister had made two. During the early part of the crisis the Prime Minister issued, on September 17, the statement to which he referred to-day. I will paraphrase it, and if I am wrong I shall be glad to be corrected by the Prime Minister. He endorsed the British government's attempt to preserve peace, but added that, if these efforts failed, the Canadian government would be prepared to call parliament and to submit proposals