

stantinople and round the Straits until this peace had been achieved.

It was further stated in the despatch that the British government did not think it was likely that the forces of Mustapha Kemal would attack if a firm front were shown by any large number of powers acting together. Mention was made of the fact that the total forces were estimated between sixty and seventy thousand men, who thus far had not encountered any serious resistance.

Mention was made of one or two other matters which, if the House had the privilege of seeing the correspondence, it would, I think, regard in the circumstances, as being necessarily confidential. The despatch contained one paragraph which I think may be regarded as the vital and essential one. It was to the effect that the British government would be glad to know whether the Dominion government wished to associate themselves with the action the British government were taking, and whether we would desire to be represented by a contingent. I wish to draw the attention of the House to these particular words, because they constitute the vital part of the despatch. The inquiry was—and I use the word inquiry because it has been used by the late Prime Minister of England, Mr. Lloyd George, in referring to this particular passage—as to whether the Dominion government wished to associate themselves with the action which the British government were taking and whether they would desire to be represented by a contingent.

Mention was also made in the despatch of reasons why possibly some of the Dominions would particularly wish to be represented by a contingent. It was stated by Premier Smuts in addressing the parliament of South Africa that his understanding of the communication was that it had been addressed primarily to Australia and New Zealand on account of their interest in the Gallipoli peninsula, and that its being subsequently sent to the other Dominions was due to the circumstance that the British government having sent it in the first instance to these two Dominions, felt they should send it to all four. I am simply giving the House the statement which Premier Smuts has given to his parliament as his interpretation of the despatch.

There was a further reference to the effect that the announcement that any or all of the Dominions were prepared to send contingents would undoubtedly exercise a favourable influence on the situation, and might conceivably be a potent factor in preventing any actual hostilities. Mention was made of the

fact that the despatch was being sent to the different Dominions.

I am anxious, Mr. Speaker, that not only hon. members of this House, but the country as well, should have every reason to feel that nothing of significance contained in the despatch is being withheld, and I therefore propose to hand it to my right hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, who is a member of the Privy Council, and ask him to peruse its contents and satisfy his mind that I have in every particular given to the House what is essential in it. I should be happy if he would see his way, and I think it would be perfectly proper under the circumstances, to allow the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Forke) who is leading an important party in this House, also to see the contents of the despatch. I think that would not be violating any arrangement which the British government would wish us to keep.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I may say that I appreciate being shown the despatch. I think it would have been of more value had it been shown me sooner. As to whether it should be shown to others, that is for the government and the Prime Minister to decide, not for me.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am quite prepared to take the responsibility of deciding the latter point. This, as far as I have been able to see it, is the first occasion on which it has seemed proper to give the despatch the publicity I am now giving to it.

I see, Mr. Speaker, it is nearly six o'clock. If it is the wish of hon. members that the House should adjourn to-night, and you are prepared to allow me to complete what I have to say at the present time, I shall try and not take long to conclude. The understanding between the Whips was, I believe, that after I had finished speaking, the hon. member for Brandon would move the adjournment of the debate, and under the circumstances the government has expressed a willingness to have the House adjourn.

May I say in reference to this despatch, that this was the first and only intimation which the government had received from the British government of a situation in the Near East which had reached a critical stage, and with respect of which there was reason to anticipate the necessity of making any kind of appeal for military assistance. I want it to be clearly understood that nothing in the way of an official communication respecting a critical situation in the Near East was received by our government from the British government prior to our receipt of