

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, brought into this house a resolution to the effect that with respect to all treaties in the future, especially those that involved military or economic sanctions, no government of Canada should have the power to commit this country without first bringing the treaties to parliament and having them approved there. I say to my hon. friend that these larger policies are the all-important essential factors in seeking the promotion of peace and international good will.

Let me read the last paragraph of a resolution which I introduced into this house on June 21, 1926 and which was subsequently

passed. It refers to a resolution of the imperial conference of 1923:

This house approves of the procedure proposed for the negotiation, signature and ratification of treaties and conventions, and considers further that before His Majesty's Canadian ministers advise ratification of a treaty or convention affecting Canada, or signify acceptance of any treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanctions, the approval of the parliament of Canada should be secured.

In other words, our method of promoting peace and international understanding with respect to these very large affairs which come before the nation in its international dealings, is to lay down the doctrine that before this country shall be committed to obligations under a treaty involving military or economic sanctions, that treaty shall first of all be submitted to and approved by this parliament. These are policies that transcend the work of government departments; they reach down to the work of parliament itself.

I may say to my hon. friend that within the last few months the government was asked, with respect to a treaty that was being negotiated between Great Britain and Egypt, whether we would become a party to that treaty. The terms of that treaty are known, they have been published. They involved military sanctions, and they contemplated military alliances. What was the reply of the government to that question? It was that we did not believe that so far as Canada was concerned the parliament of Canada would approve such a course; that if Britain and Egypt could work out a treaty as between themselves along the lines proposed, well and good; but that so far as Canada was concerned, we did not feel that it was in the interests of the British Empire itself or in the interests of the larger peace which it was hoped the treaty would serve, that this country should be asked to become a party to it; and the British government immediately accepted our view in reference thereto.

I say to my hon. friend that questions of international relations have to be considered

more and more as they arise, and depend for their solution, whether from the point of view of peace or from the point of view of war, largely on the view of the administration in office.

May I say this as a last word to my hon. friend: it is because great policies of the kind can be worked out only by administrations that in matters of this nature, are strong enough to hold their own, that I appeal so strongly to her and to those about her to see the wisdom of and at all times realize the importance of men and women who feel and think alike on these great questions, economic questions and questions of peace and war, so uniting their forces that in matters of this kind they may find themselves in the position where they will have the final word.

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W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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