

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 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 King-

dom 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. 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