

the advisability of sending an expedition to Russia?

Mr. ROWELL: I said that the Imperial War Cabinet was consulted as to the advisability of sending an expedition to Russia, having had before them the views of the military and diplomatic advisers.

Mr. VIEN: I understand it was the Cabinet in which the hon. minister sat that agreed to that?

Mr. ROWELL: Yes.

Mr. VIEN: If I understood the minister correctly he said: that the advisability of sending the troops was a matter that was left to the Supreme War Council.

Mr. ROWELL: I said that the question of where troops should be located and where the fighting should be done was one for the Supreme War Council. The question of whether the Allies should go to the assistance of the Czecho-Slovaks and the people of Russia who were fighting against German aggression—the question whether or not we should accept the views of the Supreme War Council on the importance of establishing an Eastern front, was one upon which we were entitled, and were bound, to express an opinion.

Coming to the question of Canada's sending an expedition, the decision was reached in the latter part of July or early in August that there should be allied intervention, and what Canada should do was considered in the manner I have mentioned. Canada sent men for a valid reason. It was agreed that all the Allies should be represented in this expedition. It was understood that Japan, because she had the men and was nearest to that theatre of war, should supply the principal part of the troops. Everyone recognized that this was a necessity of the situation. The other Allies were to send contingents according to their ability. The question arose as to how the contingent that would represent the British Empire should be composed. Great Britain herself had thrown every man she could spare into the line on the Western front, no fewer it is said than three hundred thousand youths of eighteen years of age had been sent over the early part of the year, in April, May and June. I saw those regiments drilling and they were mere school-boys. There were no others available, and as the situation was so critical these lads had to be called out. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Great Britain had each, in proportion to population, put more men into the battle line than Canada; and

when it came to a question of how the British Commonwealth contingent should be made up we felt that it was only right that, as we could not comply with the request of the War Office to send another contingent to France, we should at least be prepared to provide a brigade for Siberia. We took the position we did because of the critical situation that existed at the time, and in this I am speaking for myself, I sure the same is true of my colleagues—I have nothing whatever to regret in the action then taken. We should have failed in our duty at that time had we not undertaken to do what little we could to help the situation.

There is one consideration I would add, and in this I am speaking for himself. I believe Canada has a deep and vital interest in the Pacific, and that many of the greatest events of the future will be transacted around the basin of the Pacific. Two-thirds of the world's population live in the countries on the Pacific ocean or immediately adjacent thereto,—China, India, Japan, Northern Russia, the United States, and Canada. We share with the United States the dominating position on the eastern side of the Pacific, and in all events that happen on the Pacific Canada has a deep and abiding interest; and, as the years go by, will have a still greater interest. If a force was to be sent to Siberia representing the British Empire in order to relieve the pressure on the western front and help speed the day when our Canadian boys would return, Canada, because of her position and ability, would have failed in her duty at that time if she had not cheerfully contributed to that contingent. My hon. friend says that the trouble and danger were passed before they went. An understanding was arrived at that the British Empire would send a certain number of troops. Japan sent her troops France and Italy sent their troops, and Great Britain sent the number of men she agreed to send, namely one battalion,—as a matter of fact she sent two. Owing to conditions prevailing in Canada we were longer than we had hoped in sending our troops, and as soon as the Armistice was signed the matter was taken up with the War Office. We asked if it was necessary for the troops to go forward, and the reply came that owing to the critical situation in Russia it was absolutely necessary that troops should go forward. Great Britain said that if we did not send our troops she would have to provide a contingent, and at that time she was not in a position to