

"This is perhaps a mistaken interpretation," since only a few days previously you had invited his Excellency to proceed to London to discuss the Near Eastern problem. It was in any case well that the Marquis della Torretta had left for London at once.

In a telephonic conversation with the Secretary-General yesterday evening I said that this explanation appeared to me insufficient. He undertook to do better, and this morning a perfectly satisfactory communiqué from the Stefani Agency has appeared in all the papers disposing once and for all of the tendencious and malicious rumours hitherto current. The "Messaggero" published a correction and expressed regret at having been misled.

I can well understand the annoyance which must be caused to your Lordship by my reports of unreasonable protests from the Italian Government and ridiculous statements in the press. But I have been faced during this past week with what amounts to a regular campaign of French propaganda in order to indispose Italian feeling towards Great Britain and to bring Italy into line with France on the question of the Near East. As a further instance of this tendency, Havas Agency yesterday reported that your Lordship's memorandum proposing the points for agreement between the Allied Governments was only being communicated in Paris and not in Rome. The Secretary-General asked my permission to correct this message, as he had already received the intimation from me that identical communications were being made in Rome and Paris. I at once authorised him to do so. I am calling your Lordship's attention in a separate despatch to the serious inconvenience of having Reuter messages distributed throughout Europe by the Havas Agency. The Italian Ministers with whom I have to deal, not even excepting Signor Mussolini, are extremely sensitive to all manifestations of Italian feeling and attach an altogether exaggerated importance to them. I have endeavoured to explain their point of view in my recent telegrams to your Lordship and the reasons which have prompted me in addressing you so persistently on the subject. Italy is at this moment hesitating as to her Near Eastern policy and, although I believe Signor Mussolini to be inclined to follow your Lordship's lead and to adopt a firm line towards excessive Turkish pretensions, there is also a strong current here in favour of the policy of the late Government, which was that in no circumstances whatever would Italy be drawn into any action against the Turks or despatch a single soldier to the Near East. The margin of governmental and public feeling between the two policies is so narrow that I have felt that no effort ought to be spared in order to maintain the Italian Government in line with ourselves at this crucial moment, and that if this can only be accomplished by observing a somewhat exaggerated regard towards their susceptibilities, it is still worth while.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Extract from the "Messaggero" of November 14, 1922.

THE following extract is taken from a telegram, dated from Paris the 13th November, which appeared in the "Messaggero" on the 14th November :—

(Translation.)

"At 9 A.M. Lord Hardinge, the British Ambassador, proceeded to Quai d'Orsay on behalf of his Government to ask the French President of the Council to go to London to examine with Lord Curzon the attitude to be adopted at the Peace Conference with Turkey, and to exchange views on the various problems of foreign policy actually at issue regarding reparations, Tangier, Egypt and Tunis. An Italian representative could participate in these conversations—according to the Foreign Office proposal—in the examination of those questions in which Italy was interested.

"It is to be noted that the Sforza incident at the time of the Curzon-Poincaré conversation which preceded Mudania, when our Ambassador imposed his presence on the French and English Prime Ministers, has created a precedent. Indeed, Poincaré observed to Lord Hardinge that Italian susceptibility, not without reason, might be shocked at a conversation *à deux* and that for his part he preferred a meeting *à trois*. 'If all three of us can meet,' said the French President of the Council, 'I will be at your disposal when and where you wish, although I am obliged to continue a debate already begun in the Chamber.'"

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