

Majesty. There had been reports in our newspapers, dispatches from the old country—and they were alluded to by my hon. friend the other day—to the effect that Canada was initiating or insisting upon action in this matter. Just why some people in the old country find it necessary continually to seek to have it appear that Canada is the country that is pressing for certain things, I am unable to understand.

When I read these cables, I had very much in mind what happened some months ago when we were told by a section of the press of the old country that it was Canada's proposal that there should be sanctions imposed against Italy of a character that theretofore had not been imposed, that Canada was insisting in these matters. I thought it advisable very promptly to remove any misconception of that kind with respect to the existing situation, and accordingly I issued the following statement to the press on December 4. I believe hon. members will agree that throughout this entire matter I have preserved in so far as it was possible, holding the position I do, as discreet a silence as could be observed, and when I broke it I did so only to prevent erroneous impressions gaining ground which it might be impossible for us later on to overtake. The following is the statement I issued to the press:

There is one thing I should like to say about many of the cabled communications which have appeared in our press. It is quite wrong to allege that in the existing situation any proceeding or course of action in Great Britain has been at the instance of or upon the insistence of the dominions, and of Canada in particular, as distinguished from the United Kingdom. I can, of course, speak with knowledge and authority only in so far as Canada is concerned, but I believe what I am saying will be found to be equally true of all the self-governing dominions.

There is and has been on the part of the Prime Minister and government of the United Kingdom full recognition of the fact that the several dominions are vitally interested in all that pertains to the crown. As a consequence, there is, and has been, consultation between the several governments. The initiative has necessarily been with the British government. It has been taken, however, with due regard to the collective concern and responsibility of the several governments of the British commonwealth.

I have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that in replying to Mr. Baldwin's first communication I did so entirely on my own. In that particular my attitude was similar to that of Mr. Baldwin himself in relation to his colleagues. He intimated to the House of Commons at Westminster that having regard to the character of the conversations held and the critical

situation involved he had thought it advisable to deal with the matter himself in the first instance before having it come into the arena of general discussion and into the light of publicity, the occasion for which he had hoped might never arise. However, when the matter once came before the British cabinet, and I was so advised by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, I immediately communicated to my colleagues the opinion that I had given to Mr. Baldwin. We considered at that moment if we should advise His Majesty on our own as was done by some of the other dominions. My colleagues shared in its entirety the view which I had expressed in my communication to the Prime Minister of Great Britain and authorized me in communicating further with the Prime Minister to say that he might convey to His Majesty the view which I had personally expressed as the view of the entire cabinet; that it expressed our united opinion of how the situation would be viewed by parliament and by the country.

The one question upon which we really had to express an opinion was whether or not we could as a government undertake the responsibility of introducing to this parliament a bill to make possible a morganatic marriage. We felt that no government in Canada would for one moment think of assuming that responsibility any more than in any of the other dominions of the British Empire or in the United Kingdom itself. Nor did we believe that if such a measure were introduced it would get the support even of my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth).

May I say that we took one further step. When it became publicly known that the issue had narrowed down to the one point to which I have referred, where His Majesty had himself to choose between two loyalties and decide which of the two he would choose, we as advisers to His Majesty on behalf of the Canadian people felt that we should send a communication to him which would let him know, without any question, what in our opinion was the right thing for His Majesty to do. Accordingly, after conferences with my colleagues in the cabinet, on December 8, I called on His Excellency the Governor General, His Majesty's representative, and asked His Excellency if he would communicate to His Majesty an expression of opinion from the government of Canada in relation to the situation which His Majesty was considering. This opinion was communicated at once by His Excellency and was received by His Majesty before a final decision