

up simply because 70,000 Turks had driven the Greek forces into the sea. There was of course the question of Moslem opinion to be considered. It was a factor with which His Majesty's Government had to deal in Egypt, India and Mesopotamia, just as the French Government had to deal with it in Indo-China, Morocco and Tunis; but it was not a factor which compelled us to surrender the fruits of victory, and agree to set up in Europe a State of militant Turks. He fully agreed with M. Poincaré that the sooner the conference was held the better, but there was no reason to bribe Mustapha Kemal in advance by conceding the full national pact. The main point was that the Allies should not enter the conference divided. It would therefore be necessary to consider, before the conference, questions such as the future of Gallipoli. Here M. Poincaré had spoken as if it were quite enough to trust the word of Mustapha Kemal; but the British Government could not take such risks. Then there was the question of Constantinople. Lord Curzon had been surprised to hear doubts expressed in certain quarters as to the Allied attitude in this matter. So far as the British Government were concerned, the March proposals stood in this respect; and as soon as peace was ratified, the Allied troops would be withdrawn. Thirdly there was the question of the frontier in Thrace. Many lines had already been discussed, but there was no need to say before the future conference that such and such a frontier was the final decision of the British Government and of the Allied Governments. On this point the Turks, Greeks, Roumanians and Serbs must all be heard. As to the fears expressed by M. Poincaré of Bulgarian and Russian action, Lord Curzon had seen M. Ninchitch, the Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs, in London, and he was seriously alarmed with regard to Kemal's advance in Thrace. His Majesty's Government had already consulted the Roumanian Government, and from communications received this morning, Lord Curzon understood that they too were very anxious about the situation, and were prepared to resist Kemal's attack by military measures.

Meanwhile Lord Curzon would urge M. Poincaré to reassure the Turks that all points which he had stated would be taken into grave and sympathetic consideration by the Allies: that the Allies were perfectly willing to give up Constantinople after peace was established and that an acceptable frontier would be found in Thrace, but that as regards the Straits and Gallipoli, their freedom must be clearly defined. For the rest, it was essential that the Allies should stand together, and in this respect France must realise the dangerous position which would be created if Great Britain were to be left to stand alone while Turkey was given every assurance by the French Government that all her demands would be conceded. He could not sufficiently emphasise that the British action in this matter was not one of bluster and bravado. He hoped M. Poincaré would be convinced of this by the statement which Lord Beatty was to make that afternoon.

M. POINCARE asked to be allowed to make a further explanation regarding the French attitude in the matter of the note as to the neutral zones. He recalled that he had refused to send any ultimatum to Angora during the March discussions, and Lord Curzon and Signor Schanzer had yielded to his point of view. Nevertheless, M. Poincaré had regarded the note which the Allied Foreign Ministers had then sent to Constantinople, Angora and Athens as serious, just as the present note about the neutrality of the Straits was serious. France could not, however, engage herself to take any forcible action in Asia Minor. In March last it had never been contemplated that Allied troops were to be established on the southern shores of the Straits. As regards Chatalja, the French had had a battalion there already when the Greeks threatened the Allies, and all they had done was to reinforce it; but they had never had any troops south of the Straits. Again, it was a physical possibility to stop the Greek advance, but it was not possible now to stop the Turkish advance; and if they really wanted to prevent the Turks from reaching the Straits, the Allies must not seek to assume a threatening attitude, but do all they can to bring Kemal to a conference. For the rest, he, M. Poincaré, had no wish to give up everything to the Kemalists. There were many points, for example, minorities, the Allied garrison at Gallipoli, and the military provisions of the future treaty, which would have to be debated at length with the Turks. As regards the Straits, their problem would have to be definitely settled one way or another. Possibly the League of Nations would be found the best solution; but as regards the territorial provisions of the national pact, the Allies must be prepared to meet the Turks in advance in some measure. For, even supposing, as Lord Curzon seemed to think, that the Allies would be found capable of preventing the Turks reaching Europe, the Turks would simply turn again to Syria and Mesopotamia. Then Bulgaria would attack Jugoslavia,

and Russia, Poland and Roumania. In these circumstances it seemed to him an act of blindness to invite the Turks to a conference on the basis of the March proposals. This does not mean that he wished to take the Turkish word as a sufficient guarantee for Gallipoli. Here, of course, serious safeguards would have to be provided, even if the Allies were to accept nominal Turkish sovereignty. As for Thrace, the Yugoslavian Minister for Foreign Affairs had told him that he would accept a common Turco-Bulgarian frontier, and had so stated publicly in the press in Paris. He could only repeat again that it was useless to tell the Turks to come to a conference and simply to rely on Allied justice, while, in the meantime, barring their route to Europe by military measures. They must be promised a settlement on certain points in advance, even if others were left for examination and discussion at a future conference. This was the only way to persuade them to come to a conference.

LORD CURZON proposed to discuss the question of the conference later, but desired first to return to a point about the seriousness of the document intimating to Kemal the Allied intention to defend the neutral zone. The question of its seriousness could be measured by the fact that it was immediately followed by the French and Italian withdrawal of troops from the two vital places in the zones. M. Poincaré was quite right in saying that the Allied occupation had been confined under the March proposals to Gallipoli and the northern shore of the Sea of Marmora as far as Rodosto. But those were provisions for the final peace settlement, and, meanwhile, under the armistice, neutral zones had been fixed by Allied action for the safety of the Straits and Constantinople. Were these safeguards now to be overthrown by one-sided French action? Again, how were the Allies to make Turkey accept in the final settlement demilitarised zones south of the Asiatic shores of the Straits if Kemal was to be allowed to advance to occupy the neutral zones which were actually only part of the larger demilitarised areas contemplated in the final settlement? Lord Curzon trusted that M. Poincaré would again consider the gravity of the French action in withdrawing from Chanak in the light of these observations.

Turning to the question of the conference, Lord Curzon agreed that there were several points, such as minorities, and the military provisions of the treaty, which would have to be discussed in the future conference. But he did not see why all the territorial questions, such as Thrace, the Straits, Constantinople and Gallipoli, were to be settled in advance of such a conference. It was quite true that we might have to modify the March frontier of Thrace, and he did not even wish to exclude the possibility of nominal Turkish sovereignty being allowed in Gallipoli—but these were all points for the future conference.

As regards M. Poincaré's fears in the direction of Syria and Irak, His Majesty's Government, for their part, were prepared to run the risk. They trusted, however, that the French would have no trouble in Syria, and, indeed, they felt confident that, as a result of the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement of October 1921, France had a real insurance against such trouble. In any case, a firm display of Allied unity seemed the best way to make the Turks pause, if they were really contemplating an attack on Syria and Irak.

M. POINCARE asked to be allowed to add a few words regarding the Allied occupation of the neutral zone. He wished to point out that it was the French Government alone who could settle vital movements of French troops, and it was their view that these troops should not be exposed on the southern shores of the two Straits. Even if British naval action could prevent the Turks crossing the Straits, the force at Chanak was hopelessly exposed. He would emphasise once again that an immediate conference was vital, and that the Turks must be persuaded to come to it. If France were to join with Great Britain in shutting the Straits without agreeing to give the Turks some hope of substantial assistance in the future conference, she would simply be courting disaster in Syria, trouble in her colonies, and a big Moslem upheaval in Asia.