

*Supply—Lausanne Treaty*

had observed any, and they say none. My position is perfectly clear. "Oh," says the Minister of Justice, looking across to me, "you complain about Britain having mingled in European policies, and then you complain because we do not mingle in European policies." Does the Minister of Justice really think that was fair? Does he even think it was an intelligent reference to my remarks? I did not complain of Britain mingling in European policies; not at all, never for a second; but I did advise, and I urged, that Canada should advise against special European guarantees or commitments, and I urged that the influence of Canada should have been exerted to have averted Britain from that course.

Then he says: "One minute you say that we should approve the treaty, the next minute you say we should not." I say nothing of the sort. I do say that I believe an error was made, to the best of the information I have. I admit that not being present, not having heard all the presentation, my opinion may not carry any great weight; in fact, I may possibly be wrong, and I am open to be persuaded to the contrary, but generally speaking I do believe it is wrong policy on the part of Britain to become involved in European guarantees and commitments, to become aligned with any group as opposed to any other group, and I think it is wrong policy because it is inconsistent with her position as a world power rather than as a European power.

Then the Minister of Justice says: "Why don't you move to disapprove the treaty, or approve it?" I would not for a moment advise this parliament not to approve of ratification. I do not see how we are in a position to do it. If we disapprove of the treaty, we should have taken our stand long ago. This government allowed every opportunity to go by. This government is estopped to-day from expressing disapproval of the treaty. This government sat at the Imperial conference and never disapproved of a single term of the treaty. It received communications every day, according to definite statements of the British government which I have in my hand, received them every day for weeks and months, telling them of the whole course of the negotiations, and they never uttered one word of protest or advice. How then could we get up in our dignity now and disapprove of the treaty being ratified?

Then he says: "Why don't you approve?" I am prepared to vote for approval, but it is no business of mine, the leader of the opposition, to introduce a motion for ratifying a treaty. What would be thought throughout the Empire of a course of that sort? Let

[Mr. Meighen.]

the government move ratification, even at this stage, and I answer them at once; we are in no position to refuse; our only course would be to accept. But this does not excuse the government. The government had the opportunity to make the influence of Canada felt, and the government ran away from that opportunity, believing though wholly wrongly that if they did so, there would be no binding force in the treaty upon us. This is the humiliating position Canada finds herself in now.

Mr. MacLEAN (Prince): Does the hon. member think it would be in keeping with the dignity of Canada, when we were never invited and were not allowed to sit at the conference, for this government to force itself on the conference?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The dignity of Canada is not injured very much by that. It is injured when we have an opportunity we do not avail ourselves of. We had the opportunity all along. "Oh," the Minister of Justice says, "Great Britain without consulting us decided that we could not have separate representation at the conference." Now the first letter of October 27 simply says Great Britain, France and Italy have sent out invitations. Naturally we would not be invited by the other powers. We would only be invited, if invited at all, by Great Britain, to be represented in her delegation. We might press, and I think we might have pressed successfully, to have had the same character of representation sitting at the conference as we had at Sèvres and at Paris but if we could not have succeeded in that we at least could be represented in the British delegation. This is not a matter in which France has any say; it is not a matter that concerns Italy or Jugo-Slavia or any other country; it is a matter between only Great Britain and Canada. We may not have been able to increase the number at the conference table, but we could have been represented there in a way which would have brought us close to the whole conduct of affairs and in a position to influence British policy, if we so desired, from day to day. There was nothing in the world to hinder the government, after receipt of the letter of October 27, 1922, from urging that Canada be at the table, but if they felt for the reasons given in that secret dispatch, reasons, by the way, that I do not regard as powerful at all, reasons that were surmounted before and could be surmounted again—if we failed to surmount them, there was nothing to prevent us being represented in the British delegation, and the only reason we were not so