

Canadian parliament to the council of the League of Nations. It is true that, for the purpose of deciding upon the assistance to be given by Canada, the council would include a Canadian representative and that the draft limits the liability of a signatory in another continent to measures not involving naval, military or air operations.

In that respect it was less onerous than the terms of the covenant. The Prime Minister continued:

But the presence of a Canadian representative on the council would hardly compensate for the, at least nominal, transfer of authority, and, again, Canada's position in the British empire effects the protection afforded her by the continental limitation of which in any event the utility is uncertain since it appears doubtful if hostile action can widely or indeed safely be undertaken by any state upon the principle of limited liability.

There was then no doubt in the mind of the present Prime Minister that the imposition of economic or military sanctions by Canada against any recalcitrant member of the league must first be specially authorized by the parliament of Canada. At that time public discussion of the liability of members of the league in regard to the enforcement of military and economic sanctions against an aggressor state became very lively indeed. The proposed treaty of mutual assistance in the carrying into effect of these sanctions failed to obtain general support and was never brought into force. Not only did Canada not accept it, but she made independent representations to Great Britain with respect to it and Great Britain failed to accept it as well.

As a result of these discussions, the matter was again brought up at the imperial conference which met at London in 1926. That imperial conference adopted a resolution recommending that a certain procedure should be observed in the negotiation, signature and ratification of international treaties and conventions. On his return to Canada, the Prime Minister of that day expressed himself as not being satisfied with the form of the resolution proposed and approved at that imperial conference of 1926. On June 21, 1926, as reported on page 4758 of Hansard of that year, the Prime Minister of that day, the right hon. gentleman who is Prime Minister to-day, submitted this resolution of the imperial conference for the approval of the House of Commons, but he attached to the imperial conference proposal a very significant clause. The Prime Minister's resolution, after citing the procedure mentioned, proceeds as follows to indicate that independent action should be taken by Canada:

This house approves of the procedure proposed for the negotiation, signature, and ratification of treaties and conventions, and advises further that before His Majesty's Canadian

[Mr. Cahan.]

ministers advise ratification of a treaty or convention affecting Canada, or signify acceptance of any treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanctions, the approval of the parliament of Canada should be secured.

At that time I sat as a member of His Majesty's loyal opposition and the Conservative members of that opposition asked me to discuss in the house the terms of that resolution. During his remarks on that occasion, the Prime Minister said, as reported on page 4756 of Hansard:

We declare that in regard to the ratification of treaties, conventions or agreements involving military or economic sanctions we stand first, last and always for approval in the first instance by the parliament of Canada.

In reply to a question put by myself, the Prime Minister said, as reported on page 4768 of Hansard:

What I wish to make clear, however, was that all treaties or conventions involving military or economic sanctions must come before parliament, and where military or economic sanctions were involved I wished to make the terms broad enough to include agreements, so that in referring to treaties or agreements of any kind we should not have a difference over the mere use of words.

In commenting upon this, the former member for Labelle, Mr. Bourassa, gave the following interpretation, to which no member of the government or any member of the house dissented at the time:

The government invites the cooperation of parliament and declaration by parliament that no treaty, convention or agreement, whether Canada is mentioned or not, but involving military or economic sanctions, shall be accepted by the government of Canada without the approval of parliament.

Representing for the day His Majesty's opposition, I commended highly the stand taken by the Prime Minister. The result was that the resolution which I have mentioned passed this house unanimously.

Therefore I was somewhat surprised on February 11 last, with respect to the statement of the Prime Minister regarding the sanctions enforced against Italy by Canada, by orders in council to which I have called attention, and without parliament being called together, without the opinion of parliament being taken, without that confirmation of the action of the government which was necessary if the pledge given to parliament and the resolution adopted by parliament were to be carried into effect, as understood at the time, in 1926—I was somewhat surprised, I say, at the statement of the Prime Minister on that date:

On October 29th I issued a statement to the effect that Canada would apply these sanctions. Sanctions were enforced by Canada on the