

national pact contemplated. For the rest he was only sending the minimum of troops and men necessary to maintain order in Thrace, but he must finish the campaign before the winter. Delay would be fatal. He also feared the Allies had no real intention of abandoning Constantinople. He concluded by stating that he was summoning his Government to Smyrna and expected them the next evening. He would ask General Pellé and the French Government to await the full reply of his Government.

M. POINCARE suggested that in these circumstances it was essential to have a conference as soon as possible. To this the Turks must come, but if the Allies told them now that they were not to be allowed to pass the Straits or to occupy the zones they would simply refuse to come to the conference, and meanwhile attack. France, for her part, could not defend herself against such an attack. On the one hand there was a moral impossibility. France was a Moslem Power and could not neglect the serious situation which was arising in all her Moslem colonies. M. Poincaré here quoted a telegram from Tunis explaining the numerous telegrams of congratulation sent by the natives to Mustapha Kemal on his victory. These telegrams have been held up by the French authorities, but would eventually have to go forward. Again, the Governor of Indo-China had told him only yesterday that a war between France and Turkey would be completely misunderstood in that colony. The community of feeling between Asiatics was so strong there, and the Governor said that the Annamite troops sent to Syria had told him before their departure that they would only go when they were assured that they would not have to fight against Turkey. M. Poincaré felt that Lord Curzon, as perhaps the only British statesman who had ever visited the colony of Indo-China, would appreciate the force of these facts.

In addition to the moral question France was faced with the material impossibility. She had no forces to send there. Only recently the Commission of Finance of the Chamber of Deputies had expressed their anxiety regarding the small credit with which the French Government wished to cover the expenditure on additional forces to be sent to the East. It was only when M. Poincaré explained to the commission that the forces were intended to defend Constantinople against the Greeks, and in no circumstances for an attack upon Turkey, that they had voted the required sum. To prevent the passage of the Straits it was not enough for the Allies to make declarations. Either they must have sufficient strength to prevent the passage of the Straits, or they must persuade the Turks to come to a conference. If the Allies stuck to the March proposals there was no hope of a successful step in the latter direction. M. Poincaré did not believe that they would accept the March proposals either as regards Thrace or Gallipoli.

With regard to the action of the Allied commanders at Constantinople in establishing the three flags at Chanak and Ismid, M. Poincaré emphasised that the only step to which the French Government (as distinct from the French Government's subordinates) had agreed to was to send to the Angora Government the Allied note asking them to respect the neutrality of the two States in Constantinople. The French Government, however, had never agreed to send troops to force Turkey to accept the neutrality of these zones. They never even agreed to send French troops to the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It was true that General Pellé had acted on the spot in a spirit of camaraderie, but as soon as he, M. Poincaré, learnt it he had thought the step dangerous and had sent contrary instructions. It must be remembered that there were Turkish irregulars in the neighbourhood who might attack quite apart from regular troops. Once a shot had been fired the outbreak would extend. It was not a question of France favouring the Turks. All France desired was an honourable peace. At the same time, to secure that peace, France was not prepared to defend the Greeks. It was true that Greece had been an ally of France for a time during and since the war, but she had then elected to bring back King Constantine, who was responsible for shooting of French troops in the streets of Athens. There was here for France a question of sentiment like that of Gallipoli for the British Empire.

M. Poincaré here recorded that Ferid Bey had come to him yesterday officially to inform the French Government that Mustapha Kemal would not cross the Straits at once, but that he had among his followers extremists elated by victory who might drive him to precipitate action.

In these circumstances M. Poincaré considered that there could only be one answer to the question, whether Allied troops were to stop the advance of the Turks. It was a material impossibility, and the only action which they could take was to persuade the Kemalists to come to a conference. For this purpose they must tell him

plainly that he was to obtain Constantinople, and that the Allies would offer him an acceptable settlement in Thrace and Gallipoli. Hitherto France had refrained from giving any such assurance alone without her allies to Kemal.

As for precautionary measures, M. Poincaré recognised the prompt answer given by the Dominion Governments to the Mother Country, but before such reinforcements could arrive on the scene something irreparable might take place. In the opinion of the French Government there were not sufficient naval forces on the spot to stop the Turks crossing the Straits waters or the Sea of Marmora, at any rate in isolated packets of men. He would again therefore repeat that France's only wish was to obtain peace and that she only disagreed with Great Britain on the question of means for this purpose. She felt that the Turks would not be stopped now merely by the arrival of Allied reinforcements. She feared too that a Turkish attack would be followed by a Bulgarian attack on Serbia and by a Russian attack on Poland and Roumania.

To bring the Turks to a conference, it was essential to tell them in the invitation that they would get such-and-such satisfaction. They must even be given promises as to terms of peace, and, if England thinks that she could not do this herself or join in such an Allied communication, France must do it alone. Otherwise M. Poincaré felt sure that the Turks would never come.

LORD CURZON said that he would like to answer some, at any rate, of the points raised by M. Poincaré. He would begin with the various issues involved in the explanation just given as to the withdrawal of the French troops from the southern shore of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. When the French Government suggested the Allied declaration as to defending neutral zones and had agreed to the French signature being put to the communication to the Angora representative at Constantinople, His Majesty's Government had thought the latter a serious document. This was not apparently the view of the French Government, who only regarded it as a pious supplication to Kemal not to cross the neutral zones. There was to be no serious action taken to support its application. His Majesty's Government had hoped for some act of Allied solidarity similar to that taken by the British in the defence of the Chatalja line against the Greek threat upon Constantinople. If General Harington had answered General Charpy's appeal as the latter had been instructed by the French Government to answer General Harington's, and if General Harington had then excused himself by saying that the English were the friends of the Greeks and could not risk having to fire upon them, the French would have been shocked, and would have thought such action inconsistent with the alliance. It now appeared that the French general on the spot had been only too anxious to help General Harington, but that his action had been disavowed, and in consequence the French forces had been withdrawn both from Chanak and apparently (though this was not quite clear) from Ismid.

If, as appeared to be the case, Kemal was now to be allowed to violate the neutral zones and to remain in unrestricted control of the shores of the Marmora and the Straits opposite Gallipoli and Constantinople, a very serious position for Great Britain would arise.

M. Poincaré had offered in return a slender encouragement of Ferid's assurances that Kemal would not cross the Straits at once. As a matter of fact, the latter could not and would not be allowed to cross them. For the rest, the British Foreign Office knew in fact from their own sources of information that Ferid had actually advised Mustapha Kemal to cross the Straits and attack the Allies.

Lord Curzon had understood M. Poincaré to say that it was impossible for the Allied military forces to prevent Kemal from crossing the Straits and the Sea of Marmora, and in consequence his advice was that the Allies should abandon the game and accede to Kemal all his demands in advance of the conference. He would therefore ask M. Poincaré to hear Lord Beatty's opinion on this subject. He would be in a position to explain that the British naval forces on the spot would soon be quite sufficient to prevent Kemal from crossing the waters between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Meanwhile he, Lord Curzon, would ask M. Poincaré to consider seriously what value a conference would have if Kemal were to be allowed to advance and take possession of Thrace, Constantinople and Gallipoli. His Majesty's Government wanted a conference, but it must be a conference with reasonable chances of success.

He could not understand the French view that in order to induce Kemal to come to the conference we must concede him in advance all the terms of the national pact. Lord Curzon saw no reason why the terms of the March conference must be torn