

As to where my duty lies, no man can say that the Government could have done more to try to keep open the way for an honourable and equitable settlement of the dispute between Germany and Poland, nor have we neglected any means of making it crystal clear to the German Government that, if they insisted on using force again in the manner in which they had used it in the past, we were resolved to oppose them by force.

Now that all the relevant documents are being made public, we shall stand at the bar of history, knowing that the responsibility for this terrible catastrophe lies on the shoulders of one man, the German Chancellor, who has not hesitated to plunge the world into misery, in order to serve his own senseless ambitions.

I would like to thank the House for the forbearance which they have shown on two recent occasions, in not demanding from me information, which they recognized I could not give while these negotiations were still in progress. I have now had all the correspondence with the German Government put into the form of a White Paper. On account of difficulties, I am afraid that there are but a few copies available, but I understand that they will be coming in in relays while the House is sitting.

I do not think it is necessary for me to refer in detail now to these documents which are already past history. They make it perfectly clear that our object has been to try and bring about discussions about the Polish-German disputes between the two countries themselves, on terms of equality; the settlement to be one, which safeguarded the independence of Poland and which secured its due observance by international guarantees. There is just one passage from a recent communication, which was dated the 30th August, which I should like to quote, because it shows how easily the final clash might have been averted, had there been the least desire on the part of the German Government to arrive at a peaceful settlement. In this document, we said this:—

‘His Majesty’s Government fully recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussions, and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that, during the negotiations, no aggressive military movements will take place. His Majesty’s Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government, if the German Government would give similar assurances.’

That telegram which was repeated to Poland brought an instantaneous reply from the Polish Government dated the 31st August in which they say:—

‘The Polish Government are also prepared on a reciprocal basis to give a formal guarantee, in the event of negotiations taking place, that Polish troops will not violate the frontiers of the German Reich, providing a corresponding guarantee is given regarding the non-violation of the frontiers of Poland by troops of the German Reich.’