

understood by other nations, even by a nation so closely allied in kinship, in language and in the character of its institutions as the United States of America. Such lack of comprehension need excite no surprise because the association between the Mother Country and the great self-governing Dominions has been for years in a condition of development and that development is, not yet complete. The future relationship of the nations of the Empire must be determined in accordance with the will of the Mother Country and of each Dominion in a constitutional conference to be summoned in the not distant future. Undoubtedly it will be based upon equality of nationhood. Each nation must preserve unimpaired its absolute autonomy, but it must likewise have its voice as to those external relations which involve the issue of peace or of war. So that the Britannic Commonwealth is in itself a community or league of nations which may serve as an exemplar to that world-wide League of Nations which was founded in Paris on the 28th of last June. On behalf of my country I stood firmly upon this solid ground; that in this, the greatest of all wars, in which the world's liberty, the world's justice, in short the world's future destiny were at stake, Canada had led the democracies of both the American continents. Her resolve had given inspiration, her sacrifices had been conspicuous, her effort was unabated to the end. The same indomitable spirit which made her capable of that effort and sacrifice made her equally incapable of accepting at the Peace Conference, in the League of Nations, or elsewhere, a status inferior to that accorded to nations less advanced in their development, less amply endowed in wealth, resources and population, no more complete in their sovereignty and far less conspicuous in their sacrifice.

I commend this Treaty to the consideration and approval of the Canadian Parliament, claiming not indeed that it has no imperfections, but that it does in truth embody terms consistent with honour and justice and that the most earnest endeavour of those who framed it was to ensure the future peace of the world.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Shelburne and Queen's): Might I ask the right hon. gentleman to supplement the very interesting, instructive, and helpful statement he has given by answering a question I am about to put, and which I hope he will regard as reasonable. I should be glad to have his opinion as to what will be the con-

[Sir Robert Borden.]

sequences of refusal or failure on the part of the Parliament of Canada to ratify the Treaty. In what manner, and in what degree would the interests of Canada, of the Empire, and the world be affected?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: The failure of Parliament to ratify this Treaty would, of course, involve the fate of the Government which presents it to Parliament for ratification.

Hon. Mr. FIELDING: I had not that in mind.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: That is what would be involved, and then it would devolve upon my hon. friend, or those associated with him, if they should occupy the Treasury Benches, to answer the question which he has just now asked.

Hon. Mr. FIELDING: I had not that in mind at all. The fate of one Government or of one party is a small thing in the presence of the story of the League of Nations. My question was not, how will it affect the fate of hon. gentlemen on that side or this, but what effect will it have upon the interests of Canada and the interests of the Empire? What would be the consequences as affecting any one of the nations concerned in this matter? What difference does it make to us, the Empire, or the world, if we never ratify the Treaty at all?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: It makes this difference: Canada would stand out of and apart from the rest of the Empire ratifying the Treaty. It would virtually, I think, commit Canada to such absolutely independent action, that she could not be regarded in the future as acting in co-operation with the other nations of the Empire.

Hon. Mr. FIELDING: Would not Canada, as a part of the Empire, be affected in all her international affairs by the ratification of His Majesty the King and the British Parliament?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: His Majesty the King and his advisers have recognized the right of this Parliament to express its opinion upon this Treaty. I made that pledge to Parliament, and the British Government have been informed of that pledge. They recognize the situation, and they are not disposed to deal with this Treaty, so far as Canada is concerned, apart from the approval of the Canadian Parliament.

Hon. Mr. FIELDING: Will the right hon. gentleman bring down any papers that will