

the less patience I am coming to have with them. Certainly world conferences are not likely to be very successful in achieving the object they may be called together to attain. We have had several world conferences and I do not believe that any of them have been very successful. But in considering the calling of a world conference there are many important matters of policy which a government would have to take into consideration, and I mention these because they are involved in the question whether this country should ask the United States to take the step proposed. There is one matter I have already referred to, namely, the question whether in the belief of the government a world conference is likely to achieve the end for which it is called, or whether that end could not better be achieved by conferences with individual nations, taking up questions with individual nations or groups of nations primarily concerned in the matters under discussion, rather than bringing into a discussion a large number of nations which can have only an indirect interest and whose participation might only serve to embarrass the entire situation.

But there is the further point as to whether the time is ripe for a world conference such as has been suggested. There is for example the question as to whether other nations would be prepared to go into such a world conference. That is an all important matter, and before any country would take a step as momentous as that of calling a world conference, I should think it would find it necessary to ascertain from other countries whether they would be willing to participate. If a world conference were likely to meet the end my hon. friend has in view I should be inclined to think that the League of Nations might be expected to operate more effectively to that end than some new conference that might be called, for the simple reason that the league has at hand much of the machinery necessary for such a purpose. It has already given long attention to matters that are pertinent, and if the league has found it impossible, with all its background and with all that it has in the way of actual knowledge of conditions, with experts to advise in a multitude of directions, then I question very much whether the president of the United States, beginning anew, would be able to accomplish much in the direction desired. If Germany, Japan and other countries do not wish to be in a league of nations which represents all the countries of the world, is it probable that they would immediately participate in a conference called by the president of the United States. And unless they participated in such a conference, does my hon.

friend believe that the conference would meet the present-day situation? One has only to mention these things to appreciate some of the considerations which a country must take into account in dealing with a suggestion of this sort.

I would like to mention to the house what actually was apparent to the minds of those who were at the meeting of the League of Nations last year. There the view seemed to be that the fewer the nations that got into discussions of the present world situation at that moment the better it would probably be in the end, so far as the solution of existing difficulties was concerned. What the British and the French representatives at the League of Nations were most anxious to bring about was a conference of the big powers in Europe, the powers immediately concerned. They felt that if Germany, Italy, France, Britain and Belgium could get together in a round table conference it might be possible to work out some solution of the existing difficulties. Great Britain has been working to that end for a year or more, but they have not yet succeeded in bringing these nations together in round table conference. When that is the fact, is it likely that these same powers would go into a world conference that might be called by the president of the United States? These are considerations of which a government has to take account before it accepts the responsibility of extending an invitation to another country to take action with respect to world affairs, an account of which would have to be taken by the government to which the invitation was extended.

I am sympathetic with much my hon. friend has said, but his motion asks that an invitation be extended. It would have to be extended by the government of Canada. Were we to take this course suggested, I believe we would be departing from a principle which cannot be too closely observed, the principle, namely, that it is not in the interest of nations that any one country should tell other nations what they should do in matters involving great questions of national policy. An act of that kind on the part of this government would be certain to be construed as an interference in the domestic affairs of the United States, and I am sure that my hon. friend would be the last who would wish to have such an impression created.

It seems to me that an answer that might suggest itself to the minds of some might be that as an imperial conference is to be held in Britain within the next few months it might be well to suggest that the scope of