

share in the international obligations of the empire and in the liabilities imposed by such obligations to the extent of our resources; and though, as it is stated in another clause, we are the sole judges of the nature and extent of our co-operation, yet the declaration as to our status is made by the representatives of Great Britain, I believe, in the abiding faith and confidence that no common cause will be imperilled by the lack of our support. That is their attitude, and that is the basis on which they concede these matters of constitutional right, rights which have been recognized throughout all recent years. If you look beyond the mere platitudes to the obvious restrictions and modifications inserted in this report, I do not think that you could find a more emphatic declaration of imperial solidarity than is contained in certain of the implications of this new covenant which is about to be presented to us for our acceptance.

Note one thing, which has not been published in the press so far as it has come under my observation. We are presented with certain constitutional aspects of this one report, but there were other reports adopted by this conference, and one of these reports, I find, contains a resolution on the matter of defence, as follows:

1. The resolutions on defence adopted at the last session of the conference are re-affirmed.

Then this resolution of 1926 makes reference to a paragraph showing what was the nature of the resolutions which were accepted at the Imperial conference of 1923, resolutions that it was not deemed advisable, perhaps by oversight or otherwise, to submit to this parliament for ratification. We had submitted to us, at the last session of the last parliament, certain matters of privilege accruing to us with respect to the negotiation of treaties, but this other resolution of 1923, which was re-affirmed in 1926, has never been submitted to us for ratification; I am speaking within my own recollection when I say that. That resolution reads as follows:

1. The conference affirms that it is necessary to provide for the adequate defence of the territories and trade of the several countries comprising the British Empire.

And then, going on as to how that defence is to be provided, it says:

The conference suggests the following as guiding principles:

(a) The primary responsibility of each portion of the empire represented at the conference for its own local defence.

(b) Adequate provision for safeguarding the maritime communications of the several parts of the empire and the routes and waterways along and through which their armed forces and trade pass.

(c) The provision of naval bases and facilities for repair and fuel so as to ensure the mobility of the fleets.

(d) The desirability of the maintenance of a minimum standard of naval strength, namely, equality with the naval strength of any foreign power, in accordance with the provisions of the Washington treaty on limitation of armament, as approved by Great Britain, all the self-governing dominions, and India.

So I can well understand that British statesmen would agree to an expression of certain so-called constitutional rights, long since acquired and developed from year to year in constitutional practice, because they received a quid pro quo, the implications of which are enormous in extent, in that they imply the solidarity of the British Empire and the moral responsibility upon each and every dominion to make every sacrifice to the extent of its power and resources, in order to maintain the empire's defence throughout all succeeding years. If we are to have this Imperial conference report of 1926 submitted to parliament, let us have both sides of the shield, so that we may clearly and distinctly understand the obligations which this parliament is asked to undertake on behalf of this generation of Canadians and other generations yet to come.

There has been a reference in this report to the Locarno treaty. We have never had that treaty submitted to us for approval or discussion. Some calls were made, I think, incidentally, for the submission of the treaty during the last parliament, but it was a matter entirely within the discretion of the Prime Minister and his colleagues in the government, and they decided to withhold that treaty from discussion, or any pertinent or relevant discussion that could affect the question of Canada's acceptance or rejection of its terms. This Imperial conference report in its reference to the Locarno treaty is rather ambiguous in its terms, and I would be gratified, before that report is finally accepted, to have from the Prime Minister a clear and complete expression of the extent to which the acceptance of the report of the Imperial conference dealing with the Locarno treaty imposes moral obligations upon us. I see in the press to-day a despatch from London which reads:

London, Dec. 13.—Lieut.-Colonel L. C. Amery, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, answering a question in the House of Commons to-day as to whether any of the British dominions were now associated with Great Britain in her responsibilities under the Locarno treaty, said that if the questioner meant the assumption of obligations under the article in the treaty dealing with mutual guarantees, the answer would be in the negative. However, he