

imposes on it the duty, to make its own views clearly known, and even to produce its own "formulae" in respect of situations anywhere which threaten the peace and which might bring about that general conflict, the dread consequences of which we could not escape.

It should be remembered, however, that this earlier Canadian policy of refusing to accept the obligations of collective security was motivated primarily by domestic considerations, by the desire to avoid taking up a position on issues which would split the country. It was, therefore, in substantial part a deduction from another principle - the maintenance of domestic unity.

This anxious preoccupation with the danger of provoking domestic disunity was the most important consideration behind that principle of our foreign policy in the 1930's, formulated by Mr. Reid as follows:

"Canada should, as a general rule, occupy a back seat at Geneva or elsewhere when European or Asiatic problems are being discussed."

This back-seat policy did not mean that the Canadian Government was content to follow where others led. Rather, we tried to be so inconspicuous that a leader would not know whether we were following him or not; or, to put it another way, to avoid anything that could be interpreted even as an implied moral commitment to share in the responsibility of putting things right if the situation in Europe or Africa or Asia should deteriorate. We were cautious about joining even in the discussion of dangerous issues. It was not, in fact, a policy of disinterest; but it often was made deliberately to appear so.

It would, I think, be wrong to believe that pre-war governments in Canada were naive enough seriously to expect that a policy of avoiding commitment could really keep us free from entanglement in a general war, should one develop. There were, of course, people in this country who believed that if we buried our heads in the Canadian sand we could avoid the effects of the storm. But this optimistic viewpoint was never, I think, held by the majority of those, in any section of our country, who thought about international affairs. The real reason behind the so-called "back-seat" policy of pre-war Canadian Governments lay in the profound differences of opinion on European affairs held by important sections of our countrymen. International commitments were avoided not so much, I think, because they might involve us in international military responsibilities abroad, but because they would certainly have involved us in domestic political difficulties at home.

Thus each of these dogma of our pre-war foreign policy, which Canada has reversed since 1939 - imprecision, no commitments, and a reluctance even to consult with other nations on the major issues which could threaten the peace - were corollaries of what Mr. Reid stated - and I think rightly - to be the first and guiding principle in the formulation of Canada's foreign policy: "the maintenance of the unity of Canada as a nation".

Mr. King himself put this first principle of his foreign policy in the following terms, at the time of the Rhineland crisis in 1936: