

*Supply—Lausanne Treaty*

garded as the sole prerogative of Great Britain. Wars are hatched by foreign policy.

And so on.

I speak only for myself, of course—I am sure you will quite understand our desire to know the reasons for your policy in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, in Russia, in Egypt, and your policy in Greece and Turkey. If I have singled these things out it is not because they cover the whole field of foreign policy, but because these matters are perhaps the most obvious.

In spite of all the information Mr. Lloyd George had sent to the various prime ministers, here was a prime minister who says that he was very anxious to know what had been and what was to be the policy with regard to Mesopotamia, Palestine, Russia, Greece and Turkey, and these he had selected merely as samples. Then he proceeds:

I come to one now.

Speaking of some objections he wanted to raise,

You yourself said yesterday, Sir, that direct communication between the Prime Minister of Great Britain and his colleagues overseas had worked well. So it has; that is to say, the principle has worked well; but I think I ought to tell you, Sir, that it is rarely that one does not read in the newspapers, sometimes a day, sometimes more than a day before receiving your telegrams, a very good imitation of their substance. This arises through the great delay in the transmission of messages.

May I recall to the memory of the committee the answer given by the Prime Minister of Canada to a question put by my colleague (Mr Woodsworth), I think it was in February, 1923, as to the Lausanne treaty? The reply which the Prime Minister gave was that he had no information but that which he received from the daily press. So, that, I think, can dispose very well of the contention that by consultation through cables Canada can be kept in touch with all matters that require diplomatic action in the world of international politics.

But let me add to the opinions of the prime ministers quoted, the opinions of others. Mr. Lloyd George, in his speech of August 18, 1921, which is quoted in the London Times of the day following, says:

Communications by cable are not a means by which you can have real consultation, because you may have a particular point of view and may alter it after hearing what is to be said on the other side.

Then Lord Milner expressing his view on this matter, also published in the London Times of July 21, 1921, says:

But experience has shown that the consultation which is necessary in order to keep the different interests of the Empire in line, cannot be properly effected by telegrams and dispatches, between half a dozen different governments.

That is the position. The testimony of the Right Hon. David Lloyd George, Lord Milner, [Mr. Irvine.]

together with the confession of our Prime Minister at the conference of 1921, substantiated by the opinion of the Canadian press and by our common sense, ought to be sufficient to prove that consultation by cable in matters of international policy is folly. I have mentioned the Canadian press. Let me give the committee one quotation from the Canadian press on this point. This is from the Ottawa Journal:

The decision of the British Foreign Office, a branch of the British government, which is responsible to the electorate alone, must be final. Let us suppose, for example, that a difficulty suddenly arises between the British government and France. It is an emergency, demanding rapid decision. Does any sane person suppose that the Foreign Office, compelled to act in haste, will sit idly with hands folded until it has the advice of all the dominions, thousands of miles away, and without the information necessary to form an intelligent judgment? The proposition, of course, is preposterous. In such a case, and in all similar cases, we should have no voice, even though the decision taken involved the Empire in war.

Hon. members will see very clearly that matters that are more prolonged, international matters that involve long trains of events, diplomatic intercourse and public opinion and sentiment, are even more impossible to be dealt with by means of cables than matters that require sudden decision.

Let me turn now to consultation in Imperial conferences to show that consultation is equally impracticable there. The course which seems advisable to-day on the part of any nation or of any conference might prove disastrous to-morrow and have to be abandoned. Eternal vigilance is required on the part of any nation which would keep on the top of the shifting sand heap of European diplomacy. Our imperial conference when inaugurated was supposed to meet once in four years. Now it meets when it likes. I do not think any time is definitely fixed when it shall meet. But even supposing it met annually, does any one think that the matters which it might settle at the conference can be settled finally, especially in view of the swift changing panorama of events which may force any intelligent man at the Foreign Office to take a very different action from what was agreed upon by the Imperial conference. This is not an adequate method; and it is not only inadequate but dangerous, for while it will be presumed that our ministers have considered and sanctioned the policies adopted by the Imperial government, in reality they will very likely be entirely ignorant of the decisions which may have been arrived at. Let us take an example: What of the events in the Near East which very nearly brought about another war and which we have heard so much about