

election or a referendum is necessary in order to enable it to take the action it conceives it ought to take. Manifestly Sir Robert Borden was right in taking that action in 1917, as Billy Hughes was right in Australia in the matter of conscription. . . ." But in general Kerr upheld the "responsible system of government". "A nation ought to act through its Parliament and through its executive. It ought to give its Parliament and executive the powers which are appropriate to its responsibilities, instead of insisting that every question should be referred back to itself. . . . A nation ought to elect a Parliament and executive of such calibre that it will have confidence in it. The method of referring back, of refusing to trust responsible representatives was what finally destroyed the civilization of Greece, which ruined the Dutch Republic, and which destroyed Poland. It is the great weakness of democracy - the reluctance to entrust responsibility to its leaders. I have all the more doubts because, so far as I can see, the really important thing for the Dominions is not the creation of more safeguards against precipitate action or to secure unity, but the obtaining of adequate information about foreign affairs and active participation in the diplomacy of the world. That is why I said to you that if it became necessary to give the undertaking that Meighen discussed at Hamilton, I thought it was essential that it should be coupled with the creation on the part of the Dominions of a complete Diplomatic Service, not only in London and the Capitals of the Empire, but in the Capitals of the whole of the rest of the world. . . ."