

Dominions as he has in respect of the United Kingdom. The King by a single act would bind the whole Empire, as it is right that he should do, but that act would represent the considered judgment of his constitutional advisers in all the self-governing States of the Empire, because it would be merely giving effect to an international pact which they had all agreed to.

We realise at the same time the difficulty in which you are placed by your pledge to Parliament. We are willing, in order to meet this difficulty, to delay ratification (which if we alone were concerned we should desire to effect immediately) as long as we possibly can in order to give you time to lay Treaty before your Parliament. The question is how long will this take. At an early date could you not have a special meeting of Parliament, solely for the submission of the Treaty, and if so how soon might its approval be expected. It would be impossible in our opinion without the gravest consequences to delay ratification until the late autumn.

I am communicating with the Governments of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia explaining urgency, and begging them to submit Treaty to their Parliaments without delay, if they feel bound to do so before assenting to its ratification. Ends.

MILNER

159. *Le Gouverneur général au secrétaire aux Colonies*

TELEGRAM

Ottawa, July 29, 1919

SECRET. Following from my Prime Minister. Begins. Your secret telegram of July 23rd has been carefully considered by Cabinet, and it seems to us that there is considerable doubt whether under modern constitutional practice the King should ratify without first obtaining the approval of Parliament. We think that in accordance with recent practice and authorities such approval should be obtained in the case of treaties imposing any burden on the people, or involving any change in the law of the land, or requiring legislative action to make them effective or affecting the free exercise of the legislative power, or affecting territorial rights.

On the other point we fully agree that the King in ratifying the Treaty ought only to act at the instance of all his constitutional advisers throughout the Empire but we do not entirely understand the suggestion that in the case of the Dominions the signature of the Dominion plenipotentiaries is equivalent to the tendering of advice to ratify. Do you regard this as holding good in the case of the signature of United Kingdom plenipotentiaries?

We propose to call special session on September 4th for purpose of presenting Treaty to Parliament, and I am confident we can ratify within a week thereafter. Please cable whether this meets your views.